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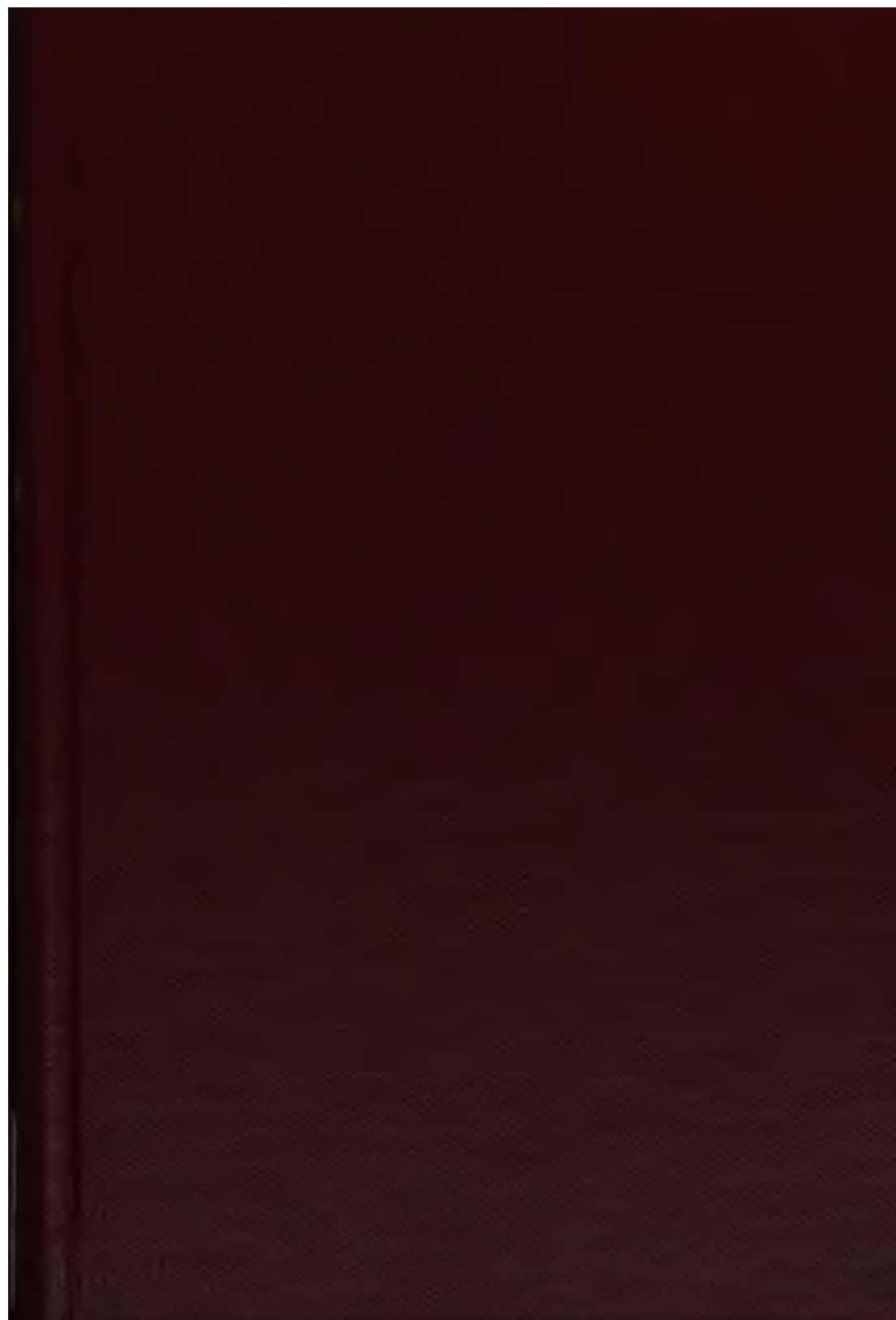
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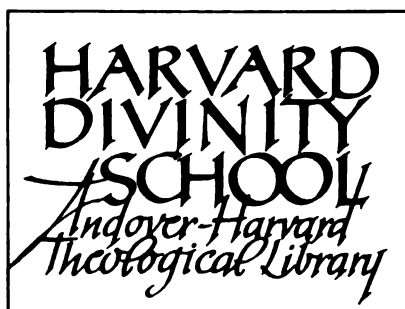
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HISTORY
OF
METHODISM IN
IRELAND.

Vol. I.
WESLEY AND HIS TIMES.

BY
C. H. CROOKSHANK, M.A.,
*Author of "A Methodist Pioneer," and "Memorable Women of
Irish Methodism in the Last Century."*

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v. 1

This Work
is Affectionately Inscribed to the
Memory of

Annie Boyle Crookshank,

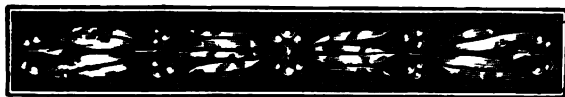
Who greatly encouraged its publication,
earnestly implored the Divine blessing
on its perusal, and now, no doubt, from
the Unseen World looks for an answer
to her prayers.

Records of Christian Work.

" WHAT said the past ? A thousand spirits rushed
To scan its records as they flitted by ;
And e'en as if a seraph's voice had hushed
Each earth-born passion's wayward revelry,
They looked with awe upon the hallowed scroll,
Unfolding brightly to their inmost soul.

" It spake of men, of holy men, who stood
As angels 'mid the dreary waste around ;
Who sought to stem the wild and angry flood
That spurned control and burst through every bound ;
Of men who gloried in reproach and shame,
And all things counted loss for JESU'S name.

" And think ye, as they traced these annals o'er,
And marked the path this suffering phalanx trod,
No burning zeal for Him whose name they bore
Inflamed their hearts, their spirits raised to God ?
That no sweet songs of grateful love arose
To Him who vanquished all their fathers' foes ? "



PREFACE.

FOR a long time many have felt deeply the needs be for a detailed and reliable history of Methodism in Ireland. The interest and importance of the subject give it a claim on special consideration : and Christian people require to be informed about it in order to see the strong claim that Irish Methodism has on their practical sympathy. The only work published on this subject—that by the Rev. William Smith—is fragmentary and exceedingly meagre ; while the interesting and valuable histories of Dr. Smith and Dr. Stevens, embracing Methodism generally, afford little space comparatively, to a small country like Ireland, however important may be the work effected here. Rich and ample materials for such a history have been available and accumulating, not only in the biographies and journals of those who lived and laboured in this country, and in the *Methodist Magazines*, but also, and especially in the *Irish Evangelist* and *Irish Christian Advocate*, which have rendered invaluable service by rescuing from oblivion numerous incidents in connection with the work of Methodism in Ireland. These various

sources of information have been freely used, many unpublished MSS. examined, and the results carefully compared. Neither labour nor expense has been spared in order to secure in every respect, as far as possible, full and accurate details; and all unnecessary comments and reflections have been rigorously avoided, so as to leave the simple facts to speak for themselves. The continuation of this work will depend on the support which it receives. A Second Volume, bringing the history down to the close of 1819, is ready for the press, and will appear (D.V.) when this book obtains a sufficient sale to defray its publication. Grateful acknowledgements are due and expressed for assistance kindly rendered by the Rev. Dr. Osborn, by ministers and lay friends of various Evangelical Churches, and especially by one who carefully and lovingly revised the manuscript, but whose hand has lost its cunning.

C. H. C.

METHODIST MANSE, ANTRIM,

March 3rd, 1885.

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HISTORY OF METHODISM.

Introduction.



THE HISTORY OF IRISH METHODISM is one of deep interest. "Little among the thousands of Judah," without political power, material wealth, or social influence, she has achieved glorious triumphs.

Although the extent and results of her heaven-born mission eternity alone will reveal, yet the work that can be traced presents a record of success unparalleled in the modern history of the Christian Church. This is seen not only in the hundreds of thousands who, through her agency, during the last century and a half have been brought out of spiritual darkness into the light of the Gospel, not only in the mighty quickening influence exerted on the various evangelical churches of the country, but also and especially in the multitude of her sons and daughters, who have gone to other lands, and have there proclaimed the glad tidings of salvation, planted churches, and continued to add to such churches members whose growing wealth and influence have been consecrated to the service of God. Thus "the little one has become a thousand, and the small one a strong nation."

"Ireland," it has been said, "is the only country in which the Reformation produced nothing but evil." Protestant Europe has been richly repaid for the calamities incident to that great revolution, by the permanent blessings which it left behind; and even among those nations where the papal superstition maintained its dominion by fire and sword, an important change was effected in the lives and conduct of the Romish clergy. Ireland alone was so circumstanced as to be incapable of deriving any advantage, while it was exposed to all the evils of the change. If a second Patrick or Columbkille had risen

up among the native population to preach the Gospel to them in the tongue they loved, the Reformed faith might have made rapid progress ; but no such evangelist appeared. The new religion was identified with aliens, that had invaded and seized the country, and thus was hated for their sakes. No attempt was made to teach the people religion in their own language ; while monasteries were suppressed, the symbols of superstition demolished, and penal laws enacted. Large districts of country were forfeited to the Crown, and numerous English and Scotch families encouraged to settle on them, thus intensifying the hostility of the natives to Protestants and their religion. Churches sprang up in all directions ; but the services were invariably conducted in the English language, and thus the truths of the Gospel were as much veiled as ever they had been beneath the cumbrous ritual of Romanism. A system of partial persecution was pursued, at once odious for its injustice, and contemptible for its inefficiency. Good principles and generous feelings were thereby provoked into an alliance with superstition and priestcraft ; and the priests, whom the law recognized only for the purpose of punishing, if they discharged their office, established a more absolute dominion over the minds of the people than was possessed by the clergy in any other part of the world.

When Wesley and his itinerants entered upon their hallowed enterprise in this country, evangelical truth was but little known among the people, and in consequence vice and immorality prevailed to an alarming extent. Eight-elevenths of the population, or about one million, seven hundred and fourteen thousand, were in Popish darkness. The penal laws were in the statute books, and although the very severity of these enactments prevented their enforcement, yet, yielding to their pressure, and the influence of secular advantages afforded by the profession of another faith, a large proportion of the Roman Catholic nobility and gentry had passed over into the Established Church, but the lower classes of the native Irish, with few exceptions, remained devoutly attached to Popery. Their poverty—aggravated by the exact-ions of their priests and friars, and by the multitude of holy days which they were required to spend in idleness—often

presented a striking contrast to the comparative comfort of their Protestant neighbours.* After the disastrous result of the rebellion of 1745, in support of the Pretender, they despaired of success, sedition was in a state of abject subjection, and Popery as a political system dragged out a miserable existence. Many of the bishops were non-resident. In a letter addressed to them by Pope Benedict XIV, in 1746, their absence from their sees is severely criticized. "It has," says he, "been to us a source of no small affliction to find that among the bishops of Ireland, some are so forgetful of the cure of souls entrusted to their charge, that one, from the moment he undertakes the episcopal office, never after resides in his diocese; another, after having devoted scarcely a month to the concerns of his flock, retires into England, and from thence into France, Belgium, and Germany; while some are accustomed to visit their churches only once in the year, and that merely for a few days, as it were, for the purpose of relaxation. What can be expected from this shameful non-residence, but the certain calamity of the people and the eternal ruin of their souls." The bishops may have excused themselves on the ground of the perils attending their residence in Ireland; but the Pontiff takes no notice of such apologies; and no doubt believed that they could now appear in their dioceses without molestation.† The poor deluded people were left wholly to their priests, many of whom were much addicted to drunkenness, and knew little save how to read prayers, which they did not all understand. Thus the Roman Catholics as a class were sunk in the deepest ignorance and social degradation.

The Established Church presented a most melancholy spectacle to the eye of the Christian observer. Being considered by British statesmen rather as a political engine than an instrument of instruction in evangelical truth, its dignities and benefices were bestowed as the reward of political desert rather than of moral and religious worth. Although those who occupied the bench did not deserve the humorous sarcasm of Swift, who accounted for their maladministration by describing them as highwaymen, who had met the real prelates

* Killen's *Ecclesiastical History of Ireland*, II, 274. † *Ibid.*, II, 255.

on Hounslow Heath as they came from London, robbed them of their credentials, assumed their habiliments, and, passing over to Ireland, became bishops in their place; yet some of the appointments were of a most extraordinary character. The days of Ussher, Bedell, and Jeremy Taylor were passed; and scarcely one bishop can be named who laboured to promote the spiritual interests of his diocese. The see of Armagh became vacant in 1746, by the death of Dr. John Hoadly. This prelate was a fair specimen of the Irish bishops of his generation. The concerns of his Church do not seem to have given him much anxiety: and he is best known as a successful agriculturist, whose undue attention to his farm brought on a fever which terminated his life.*

He was succeeded in the Primatial chair by Dr. George Stone, who had previously filled successively the sees of Ferns and Leighlin, of Kildare, and of Derry. He was a mere worldling, with very little learning, and less principle: and was appointed to the primacy simply on account of his wealth and influence, his devotion to what was called the English interest in Ireland, and his well-known astuteness as a politician. It is admitted on all hands that he was a man of unbounded ambition; and that he was prepared to sacrifice almost everything to his love of power. He held the primacy from 1747 to 1765, during which he was almost continually involved in the turmoil of politics. Some time before his death he thought proper occasionally to assume the lowliness of an ecclesiastic, but the artful statesman was so apparent in every part of his demeanour as to make the mask in some measure revolting. He quickly perceived this effect of the part he acted, and, casting it aside, appeared in his real character, in which not the least trace of a churchman was visible.† Dr. George Berkeley, who was appointed Bishop of Cloyne in 1734, and died in 1753, was a benevolent and accomplished man, yet hardly suited for the office of bishop. However able and acute as a metaphysician, his practical movements were often ill-advised and utopian. Dr. Robert Clayton, who was promoted to the see of Killala in 1730, and subsequently advanced to Cork and Ross

* Mant's *History of the Church in Ireland*, II, 597.

† Killen's *Ecclesiastical History*, II, 271-73.

in 1735, and to Clogher in 1745, was a decided Arian. His ideas of the duties of a bishop's wife differed greatly from those of the Apostle Paul ; for apparently, according to the views of Dr. Clayton, the lady who presided over the hospitalities of the episcopal mansion should also patronize the ball-room and the horse race.* *horrors!*

Dr. Theophilus Bolton, Archbishop of Cashel, who died in 1744, was an Irish prelate of a somewhat different type of character from either of the above. He was well acquainted with ecclesiastical history, especially in the department of canon law ; but he had much ambition, combined with wonderful volubility of speech : and as he was an able debater, he soon took a prominent part in the proceedings of the Irish House of Lords. His language should not be too severely interpreted ; but the levity with which he speaks of his office when advanced in life is certainly fitted to convey no favourable idea of his zeal and piety. " Sir James Ware," says he, " has made a very useful collection of the memorable actions of all my predecessors. He tells us that they were born in such a town of Ireland or England, were consecrated in such a year, and, if not translated, were buried in their cathedral church, either on the north or south side ; whence I conclude that a good bishop has nothing more to do than to eat, drink, grow fat, rich and die ; which laudable example I propose for the remainder of my life to follow."†

When the highest dignitaries of the Church displayed so little of the spirit of the Gospel, what must have been the spirit and conduct of the clergy in general ? They were comparatively few in number, badly paid, and ill-fitted for their work. " A cold, formal, worldly spirit crept down, like a mountain mist from the high places of the Church, and spread itself everywhere." The ministry was regarded as a profession, affording a suitable calling for the younger sons of wealthy traders or poor aristocrats ; and was entered upon solely from pecuniary motives, without the slightest idea of devotion to, much less self-sacrifice for the interests of religion. Clerical duties, therefore, were either wholly neglected or most imperfectly per-

* Killen's *Ecclesiastical History*, II, 256. † *Ibid*, II, 258-59.

formed ; the services being read with heartless indifference or irreverent haste, that the faithless minister might repose in indolence, or share in the sports of the Sabbath, in which Catholics and Protestants alike revelled. Cases of gross immorality, alas ! were not wanting. However prominent a place obedience to the moral law may have occupied in the pulpit, its practice in the life was not always the fashion with the clergy. Of the rector of an important parish it is recorded that an action at law was brought against him by an injured husband, which ended in his having to pay £1,000 damages, and he still continued to fill his ecclesiastical position. It is true that finding vice did not pay, he made up his mind to atone for his misdeeds by devoting himself anew to the all-important duties of his calling. So one Sunday morning, meeting Captain Savage, the Provost of the town, he enquired, " Well, Captain, how is it that I never see you in church ? " " Well, really, I don't know," said Savage. " Don't know," said the rector, who felt irritated at being treated so lukewarmly by the chief magistrate. " Do you know anything ? Come now, could you tell me how many commandments there are ? " " How many commandments there are," said the Provost, repeating the question, and looking thoughtfully on the ground, then moving his lips as if repeating them, and counting on his fingers at the same time. " There are nine, doctor," said he, appearing quite pleased at being able to answer this great theological crux. " Well, I always thought," said the rector, rising to his full height, and looking quite triumphant with the easy victory he had obtained over the great civic dignitary, " that there were ten ! " " And so there were ten," said Savage submissively ; then looking up innocently in his interrogator's face, added, " but you know you broke one of them, and we have only nine ever since." The doctor suddenly recollected he had an appointment elsewhere, and left abruptly.*

Although there were a few that feared God and wrought righteousness, there was in general but little of the form of godliness, and still less of the power. Not a few of those who held preferment in the Church professed and advocated doctrines

* Bennett's *History of Bandon*, page 416.

which were directly opposed to those which they had subscribed and pledged themselves to teach. If they could manage to get through the routine of official duty they were content. On November 1st, 1847, the Rev. Charles Wesley says—"At St. Patrick's, Mr. K. entertained us with a discourse so full of low, pitiful lies and nonsense as I never heard from any, except the ingenious Mr. Hoblin." During the Rev. John Wesley's journeys through the country it was his practice to attend the Sunday services of the parish church which were generally held at noon. Occasionally, when at all possible, he speaks in terms of commendation of the officiating minister; but in general the impression made was evidently far from satisfactory.

In 1757, the Rev. Dr. Brett preached in St. Anne's church, Dublin, his notorious sermon on "Conjugal Love and Duty," which was published with a dedication to Lady Caroline Russell, "asserting the prerogative of Beauty, and vindicating the privilege of the Fair sex." There was not one minister in the kingdom, animated by an evangelistic spirit, who preached a present salvation. On the introduction of Methodism, it is true, a few regarded with favour the labours of the itinerants; but such were the powerful influences brought to bear upon them, that they soon withdrew their countenance, so that on his third visit to this country the Rev. G. Whitefield could say, "Not one clergyman in all Ireland is yet stirred up to come out singularly for God." No wonder that as a body they did not largely enjoy the respect and sympathy of the people.

In nearly all the parishes one public service on the Lord's day afforded the only means of instruction. At this, it too frequently happened, not one-fourth of the adult population attended. Those who frequented the more fashionable of the Dublin churches did not appear to think it necessary to exhibit even outward reverence in the house of God. The Eucharist was shamefully prostituted when its reception was made a test of admission to social privileges: and some who partook of it acted with most unbecoming levity at the communion table. "I was greatly shocked," says Wesley, speaking of one of his early visits to the metropolis, "at the behaviour of the congregation in St. Patrick's church; but all their carelessness and indecency did not prevent my finding an uncommon blessing." On

another occasion, he says, "I was much grieved at St. Peter's church, at such a sight as I never saw in England—communicants, as well as others, behaving in a manner that shocked common sense as well as religion." The tone of society indicated great indifference in reference to the high concerns of eternity. Deism was propagated under various disguises: and the extensive circulation obtained by publications designed to overthrow the authority of the Sacred Scriptures, revealed a spirit of prevailing scepticism.

In the rural districts, many of the parishes were very large, and thousands of the parishioners lived at a distance of five or six miles from the church. Protestant ascendancy was maintained, but the blessings of a pure faith were lost sight of. During one of his early visits, Mr. Wesley writes with special reference to the provinces: "O, what a harvest might be reaped in Ireland, did not the poor Protestants hate Christianity more than either Popery or heathenism!" In 1750, when the Rev. Philip Skelton was appointed rector of Templecarn, Donegal, he found his parishioners "sunk in profound ignorance. One could hardly have supposed that they were born and bred in a Christian country. Yet many of them were nominal Protestants."* Mr. Skelton declared "they scarce knew more of the Gospel than the Indians of America," so that he said he "was like a missionary sent to convert them to Christianity." Nor was this gross ignorance confined to the lower classes. "He was once examining some persons of quality, and one of them told him there were two Gods, and another three Gods, and so on!" In general there was a total disregard of sacred things, moral responsibility was practically forgotten, and licentiousness permeated every grade of society. If an undefined horror of Popery had not placed an insurmountable barrier in the way, the Protestant settlers might have sunk into the lowest depths of Romish superstition.

In the north-eastern counties the Presbyterians were numerous, and at one time vital religion had been extensively known among them, but at the period now referred to, Arianism on the one hand, and Calvinism on the other, had very much impaired, if they had not completely destroyed, the experi-

* Burdy's *Life of Skelton*.

mental religion enjoyed by their fathers. It appears that the tide of infidelity which had been sweeping over Europe, had set in upon the north of Ireland, and that various publications of a deistical tendency had been recently scattered throughout Ulster. Several ministers of the General Synod, though professedly orthodox, had justly incurred suspicion by lending countenance to publications which directly assailed the doctrines of their standards.* Internal controversies, also, may have kept up a spirit of inquiry so as to increase theological knowledge, but not to promote vital godliness. About the year 1726 a division took place on the subject of subscribing to the Westminster Confession of Faith. Twelve ministers with their flocks, constituting what was called the Presbytery of Antrim, were excluded from the general body. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland thus sustained permanent injury. This controversy distracted its congregations, arrested its missionary movements, and converted its judicatories into arenas of bitter disputation. The non-subscribing ministers were comparatively few; but many of the gentry adhered to them, and the general influence of the denomination was much weakened by the division. A considerable number of the members of the Synod of Ulster sympathized with the non-subscribers: and though now ecclesiastically dissociated, still continued an exchange of pulpit services. Thus the leaven of their principles was gradually diffused; and for many years the Irish Presbyterian Church appeared as if smitten by a spiritual paralysis†. The number of vacant charges was considerable, and some of these had been long unsettled, while most of those supplied were filled in a very inefficient manner. The ministry was rapidly degenerating, and many, by an insincere subscription to an orthodox creed, gained access to the pulpits and deluded the congregations.‡

The Seceders who visited and commenced to labour in Ireland in 1746 justified their conduct on the ground of the unfaithfulness of the existing ministry. At the annual Synod in the following year, a paper was drawn up, entitled, "A Serious Warning," addressed to the Presbyterian laity of

* Reid's *History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland*, III. 261-62.

† Killen's *Ecclesiastical History*, II. 232-33. ‡ Reid's *History*, III. 276.

Ireland, and ordered to be read on the Lord's day from the pulpits of all the congregations of the Church. In this it is intimated that several dangerous errors, which sap the very foundations of Christianity, had crept into their bounds, such as the denial of the doctrines of the Trinity, of original sin, and of the atonement of Christ, and even that the Divine authority of the Sacred Scriptures had been disbelieved and openly impugned. Thus many could no longer find in the Synod of Ulster the green pastures and the quiet waters to which faithful shepherds once had guided them, and there was an absence of all evangelistic effort to reach the unsaved masses.*

The clergy—Episcopalian or Presbyterian—were not prepared as a class to undertake any bold aggressive movement on the prevailing ignorance and superstition : and societies for discountenancing Vice or promoting Education ; Bible, Missionary, or Temperance Societies, Tract Associations, or Sunday Schools, were unknown ; and the ignorance, immorality, and wretchedness that might be expected in the absence of such institutions abounded everywhere.

* Though Wesley's first visit to Ireland was very brief, it was sufficient to convince him that most absurd means had been employed to sustain the cause of Protestantism, and that it was but little indebted to the exertions of the clergy. He observes that at least ninety-nine in a hundred of the native Irish remained in the religion of their forefathers. The Protestants, whether in Dublin or elsewhere, had almost all been settlers from England or Scotland. "Nor is it any wonder," he adds, "that most who are born Papists generally live and die such, when the Protestants can find no better ways to convert them than penal laws and Acts of Parliament." Yet previous to the introduction of Methodism an occasional effort had been made to reach the Romanists, but it was generally so feeble and so ill followed up that it proved fruitless.

* The successful operations of a society formed in Scotland, for the education of the Highlanders and Islanders, attracted the notice of some distinguished members of the Irish Church, and suggested to them the idea of organizing a similar agency.

The originator of the scheme was Dr. Maule, appointed Bishop of Cloyne in 1726. In 1730 it was adopted by Primate Boulter; and a memorial to the King, praying for a charter of incorporation was signed by a large number of bishops, nobility, and clergy. In 1733 a charter was granted, constituting the Lord Lieutenant, the Lord Chancellor, the dignified clergy, and many other persons of distinction, a corporation "for promoting English Protestant Schools in Ireland." The society soon obtained large funds; and the Protestant charter schools long occupied a prominent position among the educational institutes of the country. They proposed to teach the poor children of Romanists and others, free of expense, the elements of English, including reading, writing and arithmetic; to procure for them instruction in husbandry, or in trades or manufactures; and especially to train them up in a knowledge of the doctrines of the Established Church. They were essentially eleemosynary and proselyting, and from the first were viewed with a degree of jealousy and aversion by all outside the pale of the Establishment. Gross abuses gradually crept into their management.*

Such then was the moral and religious condition of Ireland in 1747. It was therefore when dense darkness prevailed throughout the country, when most of the ministers and the people alike were insensible to their spiritual state, with few or none to warn them of their awful danger, that Wesley and his noble band of itinerants stood forth, calling sinners to repentance, and proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation. Thus commenced a work which, in its results, will last while eternal ages roll.



* Killen's *Ecclesiastical History*, II. 248.

Chapter II.

1747.

? IRELAND has been identified with Methodism from the earliest stages of that wonderful religious movement. The first Methodists at Oxford numbered but four, one of whom, Mr. William Morgan, was an Irishman. He was a warm-hearted, faithful friend; a welcome visitor of orphans, widows and prisoners, and altogether a young man of rare zeal, piety and devotion. In March, 1732, his father wrote to him from Dublin, saying, "You cannot conceive what a noise that ridiculous society in which you are engaged has made here." A few months later this devoted student was called home to his eternal reward. After his death, his only brother, Richard, was placed under the tuition of the Rev. J. Wesley, and subsequently converted, so that when the Wesleys left for America, he with others carried on the work which they had commenced. In 1735 he wrote to Mr. Wesley, giving an account of his labours at Oxford, and expressing an earnest desire to go to Georgia; but the Lord had a work for him to do elsewhere. A few months later, he returned to Ireland, was married, and settled in Dublin—the city in which he no doubt laboured, and which was the first place in the kingdom into which Methodism obtained access.

* In 1738, the Rev. G. Whitefield, on a voyage from America, *Whitefield* *Ireland* was driven by storms to the west coast of Ireland, and landed at Carrigaholt, in the county of Clare, from whence he journeyed to Kilrush, Fortfergus and Limerick. At this city he spent a Sunday. Dr. Burscough, the Bishop, received him with the utmost civility and cordiality, and at his lordship's request he preached in the cathedral to a very large congregation, who appeared deeply affected. The next day when taking leave of his lordship, the good Bishop embraced him and said, "Mr. Whitefield, God bless you! I wish you success abroad. Had you stayed in town, this house should have been your home." Three days

afterwards Mr. Whitefield arrived in Dublin, where he spent five days, during which he visited the celebrated Dr. Delany, Dean of St. Patrick's, who received him with the greatest kindness, and introduced him to Dr. Boulter, Archbishop of Armagh, and Dr. Rundle, Bishop of Derry. He dined with the former, and was most courteously received, the Primate having heard of him from some friend at Gibraltar. He also preached in two of the Dublin churches—St. Werburgh's and St. Andrew's—to very crowded congregations, and says he was enabled to speak with power. There is, however, little trace of any permanent results which followed his brief visit.

In 1745, a pious soldier in Dublin formed a small society of godly persons, and began to preach to them. Just at this juncture, Benjamin La Trobe, a young student in connexion with the Baptists, having finished his studies at the University of Glasgow, arrived in the metropolis, and became the leader of the little band. At the request of this society John Cennick, who had been an itinerant of Mr. Wesley's, but was now a Moravian, came to Dublin in June, 1746, and commenced to preach in a chapel in Skinner's alley, which had been hired from the Baptists. The place was soon crowded with hearers, and a large addition was made to the members. In preaching on one occasion, most likely on Christmas day, Mr. Cennick referred to "the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes," when one of his hearers, a priest, who, as Mr. Wesley says, "probably did not know the expression was in the Bible—a book he was not much acquainted with"—called him a "Swaddler." The mob thought the designation too good to be lost, and hence, when the Methodists assembled in the following year, they called them "Swaddlers," and the name spread with remarkable rapidity. At the close of the year the preacher left Dublin and went to Germany, leaving his hearers under the care of Mr. La Trobe.

During the Conference held by the Rev. J. Wesley in May, 1746, the question was asked, "What is a sufficient call of Providence to a new place? Suppose to Edinburgh or Dublin?" And the answer given was, "1. An invitation from some one that is worthy; from a serious man, fearing God, who has a house to receive us. 2. A probability of doing more good by going

thither than by staying longer where we are." From the special reference in this inquiry to the metropolis of Ireland, it may be reasonably concluded that the subject of commencing work for God in this country occupied the serious attention of the Father of Methodism at this period. And from the nature of the reply, together with the fact that within about twelve months the work was begun, it may be assumed that a request was received from some person in Dublin to send labourers to this sadly neglected portion of the Lord's vineyard.

* Ireland was first visited by a Methodist preacher in the person of Thomas Williams. He was a member of a respectable Welsh family, and, having received a liberal education, graduated at one of the Universities. His subsequent career was exceedingly erratic. Having entered the itinerancy in 1741, at the close of the following year he was at work with Mr. Wesley in Newcastle. But early in 1743 he was appointed by Mr. Whitefield superintendent of his societies, "in the Vale of Glamorgan and in part of Monmouthshire," and also was present at the Conference of Calvinistic Methodists, held three months later at Waterford, in Wales. In the following year, however, he was at work again in connexion with the Wesleys, and gave them no little trouble by his rashness and folly ; but having acknowledged the wrong he had done, and sought forgiveness, he was permitted to resume his position in the itinerancy. He was a man of attractive appearance, pleasing manner, and good address ; with great zeal and enterprise, and most acceptable as a preacher ; but ambitious, impatient of control, unstable in his religious views, and sadly lacking in high moral principle.

In the summer of 1747, Williams crossed the Channel, to labour in the city of Dublin. Most likely the first place of preaching was Oxmantown Green, so often afterwards used for similar services. It was a place of public resort, especially on the Sabbaths, and on the holy days, so numerous in the country. The Royal Barracks were there, and when not on duty, soldiers lounged about in idle frolic, or joined their comrades in dissipation and vice.

For some time Williams had no preaching place, yet multitudes flocked to hear in the open-air, and the Lord

crowned his labours with success. At length a portion of a house situated at the corner of Marlborough street and Talbot street, originally designed for a Lutheran church, was secured for the services. It had accommodation for about four hundred persons, but four or five times that number could stand in the yard, which was very spacious. A special interest is attached to these premises, as the first house of worship occupied by the Methodists in Ireland. A society also was soon formed, most of the members of which the Lord had given to Mr. Williams as seals to his ministry. Amongst these was Mr. William Lunell, a banker who resided in Francis street. He was a member of a noble Huguenot family, and, being a gentleman of wealth and influence, was a great acquisition to Methodism in the city.

The labours of Williams having thus been attended with signal success, he sent an account of his work to the Rev. John Wesley, who at once resolved to visit Dublin. In this journey he was accompanied by Mr. John Trembath, who had entered the itinerancy in 1743, and though more to be admired than Williams in submission to legitimate authority, and loving esteem for those who ruled, yet closely resembled him not alone in zeal, enterprise and popularity, but also, alas! in instability of character and lack of moral principle. Wesley, with his companion, landed at St. George's quay on Sunday morning, August 9th, and was entertained Mr. Lunell. Soon after his arrival he heard the bells ringing for church service, and went thither without delay. In the afternoon he wrote a line to the curate of St. Mary's, the Rev. Moses Rouquier, A.M., who sent him word he should be glad of his assistance. So he preached there "to as gay and senseless a congregation as he ever saw;" but was not afforded the opportunity of doing so again, although the curate thanked him heartily, professed much sympathy with his work, and commended his sermon in strong terms. It is only fair however to say that he expressed the strongest prejudice against lay preachers, or preaching out of a church; and added that the Archbishop was resolved to suffer no such irregularities in his diocese. But Wesley paid little attention to this intimation: for he obeyed God rather than man, and, in response to the Divine call, was ready not

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church

only to preach himself in the streets, on the highways, or wherever he could get people to hear; but also to afford others an opportunity of doing so, whom he believed were moved thereto by the Holy Ghost. At the same time being desirous to obtain the co-operation of those in authority, as far as possible, he seized the earliest opportunity of waiting on Dr. Charles Cobbe, who then had charge of the Archbishopal diocese: and in conversation with his Grace for two or three hours answered numerous objections; but evidently failed to remove either the prejudices he entertained against Methodists, or the restrictions he had placed on their work, every pulpit being closed against them.

On Monday morning, 10th, Mr. Wesley met the Society at five o'clock and preached at six, on "Repent ye, and believe the Gospel." The house could not contain the people who assembled to hear, and who seemed to feed on the Word of Life. He continued to preach morning and evening to large congregations, including many persons of wealth, as well as ministers of different religious denominations: and so favourably was he impressed by his hearers, that he thought that if his brother or he could remain for a few months in the city the Society would become larger than even the one in London. The very cordiality of the people, and their readiness to hear, became a source of solicitude to him. In writing to his friend, Mr. Ebenezer Blackwell, he says:—"I have found a home in this strange land. I am at Mr. Lunell's just as at the Foundery; only that I have not such attendance here, for I meet the people at another part of the town. For natural sweetness of temper, for courtesy and hospitality, I have never seen any people like the Irish. Indeed, all I converse with are only English transplanted into another soil; and they are much mended by the removal, having left all their roughness and surliness behind them. They receive the Word of God with all gladness and readiness of mind. The danger is, that it should not take deep root, that it should be as seed falling on stony ground." In his Journal he says, "The people in general are of a more teachable spirit than in most parts of England; but on that very account they must be watched over with the more care, being equally susceptible of good and ill impressions."

At length Mr. Wesley examined the Society, having delayed to do so until he had gone through and explained its rules. He found it contained two hundred and eighty members, many of whom appeared to be strong in faith. In the meantime, Mr. La Trobe, the Moravian preacher, took alarm, read in his pulpit part of the "Short View of the Difference between the Moravians and the Methodists," and added many bitter words; but this did service to the Society rather than otherwise.

On Sunday, 23rd, the room was so crowded in the morning that Mr. Wesley thought it best in the evening to begin before the usual time. Yet a multitude of people got together in the house, yard, and street, far more than his voice could reach, while he cried aloud to as many as could hear, "all things are ready, come ye to the marriage." Having spent exactly two weeks in the city, and leaving the Society under the care of Mr. Trembath, he set sail for England. *home*

Soon, however, persecution broke out against the Methodists. The city had been long remarkable for its lawlessness. Robberies and murders were frequently committed in the streets. The butchers of Ormond market, and the weavers of the Liberty would sometimes meet, and fight until one or more persons were killed. On one occasion a constable was beaten to death in the open streets, and the body hung up in triumph, yet no one was called to account for it. The magistrates were weak and inefficient, and consequently their authority was despised. It is no wonder that the Methodists, in the midst of such surroundings, were roughly treated; but through the blessing of Divine Providence they were enabled to get a firm footing before persecution arose, and then passed through it with comparatively little injury. Both Roman Catholic and Protestant mobs abused them; and, waxing bold with impunity, one Sunday evening they assaulted the house where the Society met, and, as the members went out, attacked them with sticks and stones. Several were knocked down and beaten, while others retreated to the room. The mob then broke open the door, tore down the desk, forms, and wainscoting, carried them into the street and burnt them. They then broke into, and ransacked a warehouse over the preaching room, seized about one hundred pounds worth of goods, and committed the remainder to the flames. *

During this scene of tumult and carnage, a coach drove past with some young ladies in it, who, apprehensive of fire, made inquiry, and were informed that "it was only a mob pulling down the swaddling house, and burning the pulpit and benches in the street." "Ah!" said one of these maidens, "I am glad of that, I hope these false prophets will now be driven out of the kingdom. If they would only try to do some good to the poor ignorant Papists, they might be borne with; but to think of their assurance in pretending to instruct good Protestants, when we have everything we can wish for in our own Church—it is intolerable." That young lady was Miss Teare, of Athlone, of whom more again.

Some time later the Lord Mayor came with his guard, saw the havoc the mob had made, and readily granted warrants to apprehend the rioters. Some of these mocked his authority, others were sent to prison, but when the time of trial came, the Grand Jury threw out the bills, and thus the Methodists were abandoned to the fury of their persecutors. Mr. Trembath, in a letter to Mr. Wesley, says that all the city was in an uproar, * the lives of the Methodists were in imminent peril; some of the citizens said it was a shame to treat them thus, and others that the dogs deserved to be hanged, and the magistrates refused to interfere. Yet, notwithstanding these trials, very few were turned aside, the Society, which numbered three hundred and eighty six, increased daily, and the majority, standing firm as marble pillars, resolved to die rather than deny their Lord. "No one," adds the brave itinerant, "is fit to be a preacher here who is not ready to die any moment."

In the midst of these adverse circumstances, on September 9th the Rev. Charles Wesley arrived in Dublin, accompanied by Mr. Charles Perronet, a son of the Rev. V. Perronet, the venerated vicar of Shoreham in Kent. They proceeded, followed by an insolent and outrageous mob, to the shattered room in Marlborough street, where they met a few people, "who did not fear what men or devils could do to them," and where C. Wesley began his labours in Ireland by preaching on "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, &c." On the day following he met the Society, and says, "The Lord knit our hearts together in love, stronger than death. We both wept and

rejoiced for the consolation. God hath sent me, I trust, to confirm their souls, and keep them together in the present distress."

Mr. C. Wesley was employed daily in preaching and expounding the Word, and in visiting and praying with the people. Still, however, persecution continued. In writing to Mr. Blackwell on September 17th, he says:—"Can you stand safe on shore, and see us in the ship, tossed with tempest, and not pity us? Let your compassion put you upon constant prayer for the little persecuted flock in this place. We live literally by (the prayer of) faith. Here are very many who long to hear the Word, but are kept away by fear. Neither is their fear groundless: for unless the Jury find the bill against the rioters, murder will surely be; and if it begin, it will not end with us. I cannot repent of my coming hither in such a dangerous season, nor am I very anxious about the event. The hairs of my head are all numbered: and if my Master has more work for me, I shall certainly live to do it." Although these terrible apprehensions were not fully realized, yet considerable injury was done. A member of the Society was knocked down, cut severely, and thrown into a cellar; and one of the Moravian brethren, a feeble man, was so maltreated that he died. The murderer was tried, "but acquitted as usual." Mr. C. Wesley himself was in the midst of perils, but escaped without a blow, except one, when he was stoned through the length of a street, and struck with a missile, although young Perronet endeavoured to screen him.

At length the fortitude and resolution of the devoted band in some degree overcame the malice of the populace; and the brave evangelist resolved, in the strength of the Lord, though at the peril of life, to go forth to Oxmantown Green, and there publicly "preach Christ crucified." On the first occasion the people, Protestants and Roman Catholics, evidently surprised at such a fearless act, gave respectful attention, and when C. Wesley returned, thousands assembled to hear, but many to hinder. In vain, however, did the deluded people rage and shout and cast stones, all their efforts proved futile, not being permitted to hurt the preacher, or any of his hearers.

On another occasion, when the number assembled was very

great, a deep sense of awe seemed to overcome all opposition. C. Wesley spoke with great freedom to the poor Roman Catholics, urging them to repentance and the love of Christ, and quoting from their own authors. All listened with rapt attention, and many with tears. They expressed general satisfaction, especially the Romanists, who affirmed that he was a good Catholic. Thus the numbers that attended these open-air services increased, while opposition gradually diminished, and souls were won for Christ.

Of the members of Society, C. Wesley says, "All are in earnest, and seem made without fear. I have not seen such soldiers before, so young and yet so valiant."

In the midst of these incessant labours, the poet of Methodism found time to publish at least two hymn books, entitled, "Hymns for those that seek, and those that have Redemption in the Blood of Jesus Christ," and "Hymns of Praise and Thanksgiving for the Promise of the Father." These sacred songs, as a whole, no doubt strikingly illustrate the religious experience of the members of the Dublin Society at this early period.

A fresh difficulty, however, now arose. Intimation was given that the Society must give up their preaching room, and it was no easy matter at first to get another. C. Wesley was offered the house used by the Moravians, but very properly declined to accept it, unless the members of that Society refused to retain it. Another and much more suitable opening was soon presented.

At this period the Earl of Meath's Liberty was apparently the most flourishing and wealthiest part of the city, owing principally to the cotton, silk and broad cloth weaving, as well as the tanning and leather-dressing trades in that locality. Education and religion amongst the workpeople were altogether neglected or ignored, and immorality existed to an alarming extent. Prize and cock fighting, card playing, drunkenness, and other vices abounded. The employers complained bitterly, but felt quite helpless to improve the moral condition of the workmen. Just then a party of Methodists waited on them to request that Mr. C. Wesley should be afforded an opportunity of preaching to the weavers: and they not only consented, but

also expressed their willingness to afford every assistance in their power. There was a large building in Cork street, where the looms were kept, called "the Weavers' Store," which could accommodate about five hundred persons, and it was arranged that this should be cleared out for the service. On the day appointed hundreds assembled; but the half of those who came could not get into the room. When C. Wesley arrived they gave him a hearty reception, and behaved with all due respect. He was surrounded by a large number of the members of Society, and after singing and prayer, announced as his text Hebrews ii. 3. The poor weavers were greatly broken down, and a deep impression was made on all who heard. Before the congregation dispersed it was intimated that C. Wesley would preach again in a few days in an adjacent field: at which meeting several thousands were present, and were most orderly and attentive. A check was thus given to the sinful habits of the people, many of whom subsequently became Methodists.

Thus encouraged, C. Wesley purchased a room in that neighbourhood, called Dolphin's Barn, now known as 104 Cork street. The whole ground floor, which had been a weaver's shop, was forty-two feet long, and twenty-four broad, and was turned into a preaching room, with two rows of benches and a pulpit at the end, while the preachers were accommodated in the rooms above. But, previous to completing the purchase he wrote to his brother for his opinion on the matter. His letter is dated October 9th, and having said that one advantage of the house was that they could go to it immediately, he adds, "I must go there or to some other lodgings, or take my flight: for here I can stay no longer. A family of squalling children, a landlady just ready to lie in, a maid who has no time to do the least thing for us, are some of our conveniences. Our two rooms for four persons (six when J. Healy and J. Haughton come) allow no opportunity for retirement. Charles and I groan for elbow-room; our diet answerable to our lodgings; no one to mend our clothes; no money to buy more. I marvel that we have stood our ground so long in these lamentable circumstances. It is well I could not foresee while on your side of the water."

2nd church
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On the following day he wrote to Mr. Blackwell, saying, that when he came to the city the Society was persecuted, and no one would venture to let them have a house or room ; but now the hearts of the people were changed, and offers were made of several convenient places, especially of a house and garden, which appeared most suitable, and concerning which he had written to his brother. A week later he observes that he had spent the day in the house purchased at Dolphin's Barn, and could almost set up his rest there, but dare not look for rest on this side eternity. He opened the "new house" on Sunday, * October 25th, by preaching to a great multitude, within and without ; and though he preached not fewer than five times during the day, and also attended a three hours' service at St. Patrick's, he was "as fresh" at night as when he commenced his labours in the morning.

On the following Saturday he preached for the last time, as he thought, in Marlborough street room, on Revelation vii. 14, and says, "It was a time of solemn rejoicing in hope of His coming to wipe away all tears from our eyes." Subsequently when the tide of popular feeling had in some measure turned, the Society appear to have regained possession of their old quarters, stained with their blood, and hallowed by many sacred associations.

Large additions at this time were made to the congregations in several of the Protestant churches, and the majority of the * communicants at St. Patrick's were Methodists, led forward to the Lord's table by C. Wesley himself.

Amongst the numerous conversions which resulted from the Divine blessing on the labours of this devoted minister was one, not only interesting in itself, but most important in its influence and consequences. He says :—"October 11th. I spent the evening with Mrs. M——, a true mourner in Zion, till the Lord on Wednesday put the new song in her mouth. She set us all on fire with the warmth of her first love." This lady was a widow, a sister-in-law of Mr. Samuel Handy, of Coolalough, in the parish of Ardnurcher, Westmeath. She went to hear Mr. C. Wesley preach, and thus was led to give her heart to God and become a member of the Society. Mr. Handy, subsequently, on paying her a visit was so impressed with the seriousness of

her spirit and the plainness of her attire that he feared she had fallen into some pecuniary embarrassment, and therefore offered to do anything in his power to assist her. But she assured him that nothing adverse had happened to her, and that on the contrary she was more contented and happy than ever before. In the course of the afternoon she intimated her intention to go in the evening to hear a Methodist preacher, and requested her brother-in-law to accompany her. At this he expressed great surprise. "What," said he, "do you go to hear these men? Are they not the false prophets, the wolves in sheep's clothing, of whom we are commanded to beware?" "I entreat you," she replied, "not to be led by false and unfounded reports, but to hear and judge for yourself;" and to oblige her he reluctantly consented. On entering the room at Dolphin's Barn he was not a little annoyed to find his sister-in-law and himself surrounded by poor, mean-looking people, so different from his wonted fellow-worshippers in the parish church; and proceeded to secure his pockets lest they should be picked. Soon a tall, thin man, in plain black clothes, with dark hair, entered and took possession of the pulpit. He was Paul Greenwood, a native of Haworth, who had just entered the itinerancy; a man of great simplicity and uprightness of heart, and distinguished by deep seriousness, heavenly mindedness, and close communion with God. Mr. Handy regarded him with surprise, being minus wig, gown and bands, which, according to his idea, were essential to a minister of the Gospel. He was still more astonished when the preacher, having given out a hymn, the congregation united in singing it with one heart and voice. "Wonderful," thought he, "that so despicable a people should be able to sing so delightfully!" The extemporaneous prayer that followed, so full of sacred unction, thrilled his heart, and prepared him to follow with no ordinary interest the preacher's discourse. This was accompanied with such light and power as produced a complete change in his views and feelings, and led him to resolve, "This people shall be my people, and their God shall be my God"—a solemn determination which he was enabled to keep through life. At the close of the service he requested his sister-in-law to invite the preacher to breakfast next morning, which she gladly did. At

* this interview Mr. Handy obtained such information as to the nature, design and teaching of Methodism as led him to give the servant of God a hearty invitation to his house, and to express his conviction that if he would come and preach, much spiritual good would follow. The request was promptly and thankfully complied with, and Coolalough became at once an established preaching place, and a centre of Methodist influence, from which Divine light radiated for many miles round; as not only Templemacateer, the residence of Jonathan Handy, brother of Samuel, but Tyrrell's Pass, Philipstown, Tullamore, Moate, and Athlone were all speedily visited by the preachers, and became scenes of holy and blessed gospel triumphs. In these excursions the itinerants were generally accompanied, at least in the first instance, by Mr. S. Handy, whose example and influence no doubt proved a tower of strength. On December 15th, Charles Wesley wrote to Mr. Blackwell, that in the previous week he had sent about forty miles into the country a preacher who had reported that the Word ran very swiftly, and there was promise of a glorious harvest.

Thus the close of the year found two or three itinerants faithfully at work in Dublin, while one or two more were travelling through the provinces proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation. And although eight months had not elapsed from the introduction of Methodism into Ireland, not only were many Protestants and Roman Catholics converted, but also such a footing was obtained by the Society in the metropolis and midland counties, as served for a vantage ground from which other and greater triumphs were to be won.



Chapter II.

1748.

At the commencement of the year 1748 there were probably seven Methodist preachers at work in Ireland, including C. Wesley, T. Williams, C. Perronet, J. Trembath, J. Haughton, J. Healy, and S. Larwood. The last named was at this time labouring in the midland counties with considerable success; but, having got one of his limbs severely scalded, was obliged to remain at Athlone for a few weeks, where his presence and work for Christ were made a great blessing, and a small society was formed. At this period Miss Teare was led to attend the services, which proved the means not only of her conversion and becoming a member of the Society, but also eventually of convincing her father and mother of the truth, so that they became firmly attached to Methodism.

On January 15th, Charles Wesley writes: "I heard more good news from the country, whither we had sent some of our preachers. At Tyrrell's Pass and the neighbouring towns there seems to be a great awakening;" and again, five days later, he says, "Mr. Handy brought glad tidings from the country, which made me eager to go with him." Accordingly on Monday morning, February 8th, accompanied by some of the preachers, he took horse for Tyrrell's Pass. Late in the evening, half choked with the fog, they arrived at the residence of Mr. Stephen Fouace, where the preachers stopped. The town seemed aroused, and many crowded in after them to the service. "Never have I spoken to more hungry souls," says C. Wesley; "they devoured every word, some expressed their satisfaction in a way peculiar to them, and whistled for joy. Few such feasts have I had since I left England. It refreshed my body more than meat or drink." Then with reference to the cause in the town, he adds, "God has begun a great work here. The people of Tyrrell's Pass were wicked to a proverb—swearers, drunkards, Sabbath breakers, thieves, &c., from time im-

memorial. But now the scene is entirely changed: not an oath is heard, or a drunkard seen among them. *Aperto vivitur horto*. They are turned from darkness to light. Near one hundred are joined in Society, and following hard after the pardoning God." On a subsequent occasion the barn was filled with high and low, rich and poor, whose curiosity brought them from all parts. C. Wesley shewed them their awful state, and their only remedy, and they listened for two hours, and seemed to feel the power of the Word. A king's counsellor followed the servants of God to their temporary home, had much serious conversation with them, and sat up the whole of the following night searching the Scriptures to see if what he had heard was true. An intelligent Roman Catholic seemed satisfied with the answers given to his objections, and not far from the kingdom of heaven. And another, who had been a notorious sinner, went away convinced of sin, and longing to be converted. Here also was visited Mrs. Wade, aged ninety-five, who had been a merely nominal Christian for almost a century, and now earnestly sought the Divine favour that she might depart in peace.

Next day Charles Wesley rode to Mr. J. Handy's, Templemacateer, and pointed several to the Lamb of God. Then a party of seven started for Athlone. Some persons overtook them on the road running in great haste, and one horseman riding at full speed; but they suspected nothing, and rode on singing till within half a mile of the town. As they ascended a little hill three or four men appeared and bade them go back; but they did not mind them, thinking they were in jest. Then they were attacked by a Popish mob, who saluted them with a shower of stones; but by spurring on their horses, they escaped without any serious injury, except J. Healy, who was knocked down and severely hurt, and Mr. Fouace, who received a blow in the head and was disabled. The man who wounded Mr. Healy was about to finish his desperate deed with a knife, swearing that he would cut him up, when a poor woman came to the assistance of the wounded preacher, and swore as stoutly that he should not be touched. The ruffian half killed her with a blow, from the effects of which she afterwards died, yet she restrained him until help came. The hedges were all lined

with Roman Catholics, who kept the field till they saw the Dragoons coming, when they took to their heels and Mr. S. Handy after them. The ringleader was seized and given in charge to the high constable, who quickly let him go: a Protestant, however, met him and beat him unmercifully, but he escaped and fled for his life sorely wounded. It appeared the mob had laid their scheme to murder the Methodists at the instigation of their priest, who had sounded an alarm on the previous Sunday; and the assailant of Mr. Healy was none other than the priest's servant, and rode his master's horse. The plot had been made known to the local authorities, who had ordered the soldiers to meet and guard the itinerants; but as the latter arrived before the time announced, both friends and foes were prevented from doing all they had each intended. The Protestant inhabitants of the town were greatly displeased at what had occurred, and especially that a clergyman should be thus shamefully treated; and when Charles Wesley preached from the window of a ruined house, which commanded the market place, he had upwards of two thousand hearers, including "the minister and collector" and many soldiers, who gave diligent heed to the word spoken, and in large numbers accompanied the servants of God out of the town. When they reached the scene of the terrible conflict of the morning, and saw the ground stained with blood, they halted and sang a hymn of triumph and praise to God, who had given them the victory. In celebration of their deliverance C. Wesley composed the following ode:—

" All conquering King
Thy triumph we sing,
Redeem'd from the foe,
We publish our mighty Redeemer below;
Th' omnipotent Name
Of Jesus proclaim,
And joyfully raise
Our voices and hearts in a concert of praise.

" From the malice of men,
Thou hast saved us again,
And broken the snare,
And scattered the folk that delighted in war;
Athirst for our blood,
In ambush they stood,
Our lives to surprise,
And hurry us hence to our friends in the skies.

"The idolatrous priest
 Their purpose had blest;
 And arm'd with his zeal,
 And inspired with the tenderest mercies of hell,
 They rushed on their prey,
 The victims to slay,
 And accomplished their doom,
 And offer us to the Moloch of Rome.

"But God on the throne
 Protected His own;
 The danger to ward,
 He planted around an angelical guard:
 Their wings were outspread,
 And cover'd our head;
 Their arms were beneath,
 And bore us aloft from the weapons of death.

"All glory to God,
 All honour and laud
 To our conquering King,
 Whom Lord of the heavenly armies we sing:
 His servants are ours,
 The angelical powers;
 And now they attend,
 And assist at the concert that never shall end."

Having sent back their guard, the evangelists went on their way rejoicing to Moate, where Mr. Wesley preached in the street. A few stones were thrown and a drum beaten to entertain some ladies, but notwithstanding this opposition an impression was made on those who heard. The itinerants then rode to Mr. J. Handy's, where they raised their voices in joy and thanksgiving, magnifying God, by whose care they had escaped death. Here they met the mother of their host, who after a moral life of nearly eighty years was convinced of unbelief, and led to seek the salvation of God. At Mr. S. Handy's, Coolalough, many were invited to the Great Supper, and two hours passed unperceived before Mr. C. Wesley could conclude. In Tullamore, at the close of the service, many of the soldiers from Dublin followed the servants of God into the house for further instruction, and it proved "a time of refreshing, like one of former days." And at Philipstown, about forty pious dragoons joined Mr. Wesley in singing and conference, both before and after the public service. Thus after an absence of eight days of unceasing labours and much fatigue the devoted evangelists returned to the metropolis, "half dead with the rain and the snow."

In Dublin Mr. C. Wesley at once resumed his numerous engagements, doubtless, if possible, increased by the fact that the Moravians having been ejected from their chapel in Skinner's alley, it had come into the hands of the Methodists. *Another chapel!* He preached regularly, met the Society frequently, and watched over the spiritual state of the members with paternal fidelity and affection. Protestants and Roman Catholics, formalists and sinners of every class—not excepting felons and convicts—all had a share in his compassionate sympathy; and their conversion inspired him with a joy, which, in its fervour and intensity, seemed second only to that of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. There was one wicked woman, especially, who excited his prayerful sympathy, a poor wretch who had been condemned to death for coining. On his first visit she cried that she was lost for ever; but it was not quite clear whether her sorrow resulted from the dread of natural or eternal death. Then in answer to united prayer her heart was subdued, and all her concern was for her soul. She received the word of reconciliation, as the thirsty land doth the dew of heaven, and resolved to spend her latest breath in publishing the Friend of Sinners. When visited by a priest, who told her to pray to the Virgin, she answered, "No. I have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous." When 'reprieved—released from her chains both in soul and body—she cast herself at the feet of Mr. Wesley, and cried, "O Sir, under God, you have saved my soul." I have found mercy, when I looked for judgment. I am saved by a miracle of mercy." Surely this was a brand plucked from the burning. '

The good work prospered, every day one or more were led to the Saviour, and the services were rich in spiritual power. In the midst of these successes, on Tuesday afternoon, March 8th, the Rev. J. Wesley landed at Blackrock, accompanied by his clerical friend, Mr. Meriton, and Mr. R. Swindells, one of his helpers, a man of deep piety, great zeal, and remarkable benevolence. They at once hired horses and rode to Dublin. When they arrived at Dolphin's Barn, they found the members of Society met together, and addressed by C. Wesley, with his wonted animation and power, and accompanied with such a gracious influence of the Holy Spirit as produced considerable

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excitement. "It was some time," says J. Wesley, "before my voice could be heard for the noise of the people shouting and praising God." The arrival of his brother set Charles Wesley free to return to England, which he did on March 20th, accompanied by J. Haughton, and followed with the benedictions of hundreds who had found the Gospel, as preached by him, "the power of God unto salvation."

In the meantime John Wesley set to work with characteristic energy. First he resumed the daily service at five o'clock in the morning, of which he speaks as "an unheard of thing in Ireland." This, however, is not to be taken literally, as both he himself frequently, and his brother at least once, had preached at that hour in Dublin; but it had been discontinued during the winter. Then he enquired into the state of the Society, and found to his surprise, that notwithstanding the glowing accounts of success he had received, the number of members was very much as it had been seven months previously. "I left three hundred and ninety-four members," he says, "and I doubt if there are more than three hundred and ninety-six." This, however, is easily explained. The Society sustained a terrible shock by the persecutions in August and September, the extent of which was greatly under-estimated by Mr. Trembath, and many of those converted, through the Divine blessing on the labours of C. Wesley, evidently did not fully identify themselves with "the sect everywhere spoken against."

Mr. Wesley having remained about three weeks in the metropolis, during which he preached repeatedly not only in Cork street, in the former Moravian chapel, Skinner's alley, and in the old premises, Marlborough street, but also in Ship street, in Newgate, and in Oxmantown Green, started on his first tour through the country, accompanied by Messrs. Meriton and Swindells. Since the visit of his brother additional openings for preaching the Gospel had been secured at Clara and Edenderry. At their first visit to Philipstown the numbers who flocked to hear Mr. Wesley were so great that he was obliged to take his stand in the open street; at five o'clock in the morning the congregation was large and serious, and in the Society he found forty troopers; but when he returned, at the end of

the week, the scene was changed, the curiosity of the people having been satisfied, few of them cared to hear a second time. At Tullamore he preached to most of the inhabitants of the town, many of them came again at five in the morning, and when he returned well-nigh all the town, rich and poor, were gathered to hear. At Clara there was "a vast number of well-behaved people," amongst whom were some of the neighbouring gentry; but on another occasion, the attractions of a cockfight drew off the majority of the people, while one or two hundred only remained to listen to the Word of life. At Moate, the pleasantest town he had seen in Ireland, he "preached to a handful of people," which was a little larger on his return.

At Athlone he preached from the window of an unfinished house, where his brother had stood, and to a similar audience. "I scarce ever," says he, "saw a better behaved or more attentive congregation. Indeed so civil a people as the Irish in general, I never saw either in Europe or in America." The persecutions to which his brother had been exposed had doubtless a most salutary effect in enlisting the sympathy of the people. * The next day being Sunday, having preached in the morning at five, and conducted a short service about a mile from the town, Mr. Wesley preached in the afternoon on the Connaught side of the river, where, although informed there were only five or six Protestant families, yet there was such a company of people assembled, as had not been seen together before in Athlone, and they received the Word with joy. Thus encouraged, he preached again in the evening in the same place to a still larger congregation, most of whom were Roman Catholics, who attended, notwithstanding the prohibition of their priest. At this period almost the whole town seemed to be moved in sympathy with the good work, and in desires after the blessings of salvation; but Mr. Wesley shrewdly remarks, "The waters spread too wide to be deep. I did not find one under any strong convictions, much less had any one attained the knowledge of salvation." However, he evidently resolved to take advantage of the tide of religious feeling which had risen, by giving as much time as possible to the town, and therefore returned in a few days. On his second visit, he

observes, "So general a drawing I never knew among any people, so that as yet none even seems to oppose the truth." On Easter Sunday, he says, "Never was such a congregation seen before at the Sacrament in Athlone. I preached at three, abundance of the Papists flocked to hear, so that the priest, seeing his command did not avail, came in person at six, and drove them away before him, like a flock of sheep." Next morning Mr. Wesley preached the terrors of the Lord, but still, he says, "those who were ready to eat up every word did not appear to digest any part of it." In the evening, however, there appeared more emotion in the congregation than he had seen before. "But," he says, "it was in a manner I never saw: not in one here and there, but in all."

The work at Tyrrell's Pass presented more encouraging features than in any other place he visited. He says, "Our room was filled at five. After preaching I found a surprising openness among them. When I asked one in particular, 'How he had lived in times past,' he spread abroad his hands, and said, with many tears, 'Here I stand, a grey-headed monster of all manner of wickedness!' Which, I verily believe, had it been desired, he would have explained before them all. Much in the same manner spoke one, who came from Connaught, but with huge affliction and dismay; we determined to wrestle with God on her behalf, which we did for above an hour: and He heard the prayer, so that her soul was filled with joy unspeakable. Mr. Jonathan Handy, greatly sorrowing before, was also now enabled to rejoice in God; and four other persons were cut to the heart, and cried aloud to Him that is mighty to save." When he returned he found the congregations larger than ever, and the Word of God seemed to take deeper root than in other parts of the country. Next evening the house was full, and many of the neighbouring gentry were present, "but none mocked."

On April 15th, having preached "to abundance of people" at Edenderry, who "were quickly gathered together," Mr. Wesley returned with his companions to Dublin. Here, he says, he found great reason to praise God for the work wrought among the people during his absence; but adds, "still there is not such a work as I look for. I see nothing yet but drops

before a shower." He remained for about a fortnight in the metropolis, and then again left for the country, having doubtless heard of other doors of Christian usefulness which the Lord had opened at Birr, Ballyboy, Mountmellick, and Aughrim.

At Tyrrell's Pass he met the Society, which now appeared "to be at a stand with regard to numbers, but not with regard to the grace of God." At Athlone he "found the roaring lion had begun to shake himself." Some Romanists and two or three Protestant families had united to oppose the work of God; but had not dared to do it openly, as public feeling was so strong against them. A great number of people were present at the usual early morning service, and some seemed to feel what was spoken. In the afternoon he preached on the Connaught side of the river to an attentive multitude, both of Protestants and Roman Catholics, including the priest himself. Mr. Wesley says, "I am satisfied many of them were almost persuaded to give themselves up to the great Physician of souls." When he returned he had five clergymen amongst his hearers, and many Roman Catholics. "Such an opportunity," he observes, "I never had before in these parts," and adds, "With much difficulty I broke away from this immeasurably loving people; and not so soon as I imagined either: for when we drew near the turnpike, about a mile from the town, a multitude waited for us at the top of the hill. They fell back on each side, to make us way, and then joined and closed us in. After singing two or three verses I put forward, when on a sudden I was a little surprised, by such a cry of men, women and children as I never heard before."

At Birr, the key of the Session house not being found, he preached in the street "to a dull, rude, senseless multitude." Many laughed the greater part of the time; and yet when a Carmelite friar cried out, "You lie, you lie," the zealous Protestants shouted, "Knock him down," and it was no sooner said than done. At Ballyboy, there being no house that could contain the congregation, he preached again in the street. At the morning service also there was a considerable number present, and such a blessing as he had scarce found since landing in Ireland. Having preached at Clara, he came to

Tullamore, where the congregation was large and quiet. Here he wrote "A Letter to a Clergyman," which was called forth by a previous conversation, as well as various objections that had been made by others to lay preaching. The gist of the epistle is, that, however desirable training, testing and ecclesiastical authority may be, the man whose preaching saves souls is a true minister of Christ, even though he has not had a University education, has never been ordained, and receives no temporal reward. No impartial observer could deny that God's blessing in saving power had accompanied the labours of the itinerants in a very marked degree, thus attesting their Divine call.

At Mountmellick the audience was the largest Mr. Wesley had seen since he left Dublin, and the greater part, he says, "seemed to understand worshipping God in spirit and in truth." Next morning the numbers were equally encouraging, and he found his sympathy so drawn towards them that in spite of weakness and pain he enforced for more than an hour the words, "The Kingdom of God is at hand : repent ye and believe the Gospel : " and when he returned shortly after, the congregations both in the evening and the morning were still further increased. Of Philipstown he speaks as " a poor, dry, barren place," and prays that " the first may not be last."

At Aughrim he heard a warm sermon against enthusiasts : and at its close having commenced his own service, all that were in the church, high and low, rich and poor, stopped to hear. Amongst others there was a Mr. Wade, who resided at Fairfield in the vicinity, a gentleman of property. He and Mrs. Wade having embraced the Gospel, and become members of the Society, opened their house to the preachers, where they found a comfortable home. Another in this locality who then decided for God, and received His servants into his house, was Mr. David Wakefield, whose descendants to the fourth and fifth generation are still identified with Methodism.

Mr. Wesley reached Dublin on the evening of May 14th, " faint and weary," and had the satisfaction to find that the work of God not only had spread, but also deepened in many souls. On the following Sunday, having conducted the usual early morning service, he preached twice on Oxmantown

Green to large congregations. During one of these services a hearer cried, shaking his head very wisely, "Aye, he is a Jesuit—that's plain." To which a priest, who happened to be near, replied aloud, "No, he is not. I would to God he was!" Having remained in Ireland for ten weeks, Mr. Wesley on May 18th took ship for England, accompanied by Charles Perronet, whose labours in this country had extended over a period of eight months.

On June 2nd the Conference met in London. Of the preachers who had laboured in Ireland there were present at it, in addition to Messrs. John and Charles Wesley, John Trembath and Samuel Larwood. This country was divided into four circuits or rounds, consisting of Dublin, Tullamore, Tyrrell's Pass, and Athlone. Although the Methodist preachers had been in Ireland only about twelve months, the Lord had so signally owned their labours that two of their converts, John Fisher and Charles Skelton, having been raised up, prepared and called by God, were received into the ranks of the itinerancy.

On June 27th Mr. Lunell wrote to Mr. Wesley giving an account of the work in Dublin, and stating that all persecution seemed to be at an end, and the congregations were the largest that they had seen in the kingdom.

Mr. Wesley, believing that Ireland required the presence of his most efficient helpers, appointed Messrs. Reeves and Joseph Cownley to labour in the country. The former, who had travelled for about five years, was an eminently useful and acceptable preacher, though often called to "endure hardness as a good soldier," his zealous and successful ministrations having more than once provoked the ire of those in authority. Mr. Cownley, a native of Leominster, who had entered the itinerancy in 1746, was a man of eminent piety, strong sense, and remarkable seriousness, considered by Mr. Wesley one of the best preachers in England.

In the meantime Messrs. Williams and Swindells appear to have gone to Cork. Probably some of those who had received spiritual benefit from their labours, having removed to that city, expressed a desire to again enjoy those ministrations which had been made such a blessing to them. At all events a call came

1st in
Cork from that city, which was responded to in June. The first place of preaching evidently was Hammond's Marsh, then an extensive grassy sward, now occupied by Henry street, Nile street and adjoining places, with a grove where the Mansion house now stands. Here the heralds of Heaven's mercy stood, strangers and unprotected, to point the assembled multitudes to "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." The people were awed into attention, and in a short time many were brought under the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit. Amongst the first to espouse the cause of the Methodists was Mr. Murray. After a short time, however, he and his family removed to Bandon : and the enterprising evangelists, availing themselves of this circumstance, visited that town, and thus another and most encouraging door of Christian usefulness was opened to Methodism. But it was in Cork itself that the work presented the most cheering aspect. A great spiritual awakening took place, the tidings spread far and near, and S. Larwood and J. Reeves hastened to assist in the good work.

On July 24th Charles Wesley writes, "I received letters from Cork, loudly calling me thither. My heart was at once made willing, and I had my commission." Accordingly, on August 13th he set sail, and arrived in Dublin that evening. Having spent two or three days in the metropolis, under the hospitable roof of Mr. Lunell, he left, accompanied by one of the preachers, and in three days rode to Cork, notwithstanding incessant rains, bad roads, and the roughest horse for travelling he had ever mounted. At Tyrrell's Pass they were welcomed by Mrs. Fouace and "the poor neglected Society," which the preachers had left for the more encouraging field at Cork. At Ballyboy they were received most heartily by a respectable Quaker. At Roscrea some of the townspeople having recognized C. Wesley, "demanded their debt of the Gospel," so he preached to a mixed crowd of Roman Catholics and Protestants that filled the market-house. At Cashel the travellers met with poor entertainment, but got a little sleep, rose between two and three in the morning, put on their wet clothes, and by seven in the evening reached their destination.

The next day being Sunday, Mr. C. Wesley preached on Hammond's Marsh at five in the morning to about a thousand

persons, who “devoured every word with an eagerness beyond description.” In the evening he took the field again, and witnessed such a sight as he had rarely seen before. Thousands and thousands, high and low, Protestants and Romanists, waiting for hours to hear the glad tidings of salvation! He spoke to them for an hour, to the utmost extent of his voice, yet without weariness or hoarseness. Not only did these large congregations continue, but also many of the clergy attended, two or three magistrates, and at least one alderman. The evangelist was treated with the utmost respect. Opposition was suspended, and all classes of the community listened to his ministry with attention, and regarded him with apparent esteem and good-will. “At present,” he says, “we pass through honour and good report. The chief persons of the town favour us; no wonder then that the common people are quiet. We pass and repass the streets, pursued by their blessings only. The same favourable inclination is all round the country. Wherever we go, they receive us as angels of God.” With regard to the work he says, “Much good has been done already in this place. Outward wickedness has disappeared, outward religion succeeded. Swearing is seldom heard in the streets; the churches and altars are crowded to the astonishment of our adversaries.” “Here is indeed an open door, such as was never set before me till now. Even at Newcastle the awakening was not so general.” “But as yet the work is very superficial. Not one justified person have I yet found.” *

He waited on Dr. Jemmet Brown, the Bishop of Cork and Ross, and was received with great affability by his lordship, and invited to dinner; but subsequent events showed that though “the words of his mouth were smoother than butter, war was in his heart.” Mr. C. Wesley had also much conversation with the Rev. E. Cottrell, the rector of Marmullane, who was clear * on the doctrine of Justification by Faith, and rejoiced at his having preached in his parish, but was evidently too much under the influence of his diocesan to take a bold and decided stand for Methodism.

Mr. C. Wesley designed on one occasion to meet about two hundred persons who had given in their names as candidates for membership; but such a multitude thronged the house

where they assembled that it occasioned great confusion, and he saw it was impracticable then to form a regular society. On examining these parties subsequently, he says, "all seemed awakened, none justified." At length he found one who had received forgiveness of sins, some others then were led to the enjoyment of the same blessing, until scarcely a day elapsed without some fresh and cheering testimony to the power of Christ to save. On September 1st he met the Society for the first time in an old playhouse, several of them having been there from two in the morning. He explained the nature of Christian fellowship. The Lord knit their hearts together in love, and His presence consecrated the place.

The devoted evangelist also made numerous excursions into the neighbouring towns. On one occasion with Mr. H——, an honest attorney, whose wife had been recently converted, he went to Passage West, where they were cordially received by Justice Parsons, who used all his authority on their behalf. He sent word to the priest that if he forbade his people attending the service, he would shut up his mass-house and send him to jail for at least a year.

On another occasion, Mr. Stockdale, a Chandler, who had joined the Society, drove Mr. C. Wesley to Rathcormack, where the Rev. Richard Lloyd, the rector of the parish, offered him the use of his church; but both agreed that he had better preach elsewhere, or the Romanists would not attend. So he went to the market-house, to which Catholics and Protestants flocked, and strongly urged them to repent and believe the Gospel. Having spent about sixteen days in Cork with much success, Charles Wesley "took horse for Bandon," accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. H. and Robert Swindells. Whilst riding thither the bard of Methodism composed a hymn for Roman Catholics in Ireland, the following extracts from which will suffice to show its aim and poetic value :—

"Shepherd of souls, the great, the good,
Thy helpless sheep behold,
Those other sheep dispersed abroad,
Who are not of this fold :
By Satan and his factors bound
In ignorance and sin,
Recall them through the Gospel sound,
And bring the outcasts in.

“If Thou wilt work a work of grace,
 Who shall the hinderer be?
 Shall all the human, hellish race
 Detain Thy own from Thee?
 Shall Satan keep, as lawful prize,
 A nation in his snare?
 Hosts of the living God, arise
 And try the force of prayer!

“Come then, the all-victorious Name,
 Jesus, whom demons flee,
 Redemption in Thy blood proclaim,
 And life and liberty.
 Satan and all his hosts confound,
 Burst ope the dungeon door;
 Deliverance preach to spirits bound,
 And pardon to the poor.”

The evangelizing party must have started early, for they reached Bandon at ten a.m., having travelled about eighteen English miles by a very hilly road. Taking his stand on a scaffold in front of the market-house in South Main street, Charles Wesley opened his commission “to about a thousand wild, gaping people,” by announcing for his text, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” Among the crowd were a few Romanists who had followed him. There were also four ministers, who confessed that he had spoken the truth. All seemed greatly pleased, and rejoiced that he would preach again. In the evening “the whole town was gathered together, with many out of the country.” Three of the ministers were present again, and the Provost or Governor, Mr. D. Connor, with many of the gentry. Next morning, at an early hour, Mr. Wesley was surprised to find as numerous an audience as on the previous night, and “they drank in every word.” After the service he breakfasted with the only family of Quakers in the town. In the evening he preached again; many Romanists were present, with others who had not been in a church for years. Next day he spent an hour in the Town-hall with some hundreds, praying and singing. They were impatient to take the kingdom of heaven by violence, and wished to have classes formed. When the preachers first visited the town, a Mrs. Needham attended their ministry, and heard the doctrine of Justification explained, which blessing she had previously enjoyed. Convinced that these men were sent of God, she was the first to

in Bandon
 enrol her name as a member of Society. From this time her house was the home of the messengers of mercy ; she became the nursing mother of Methodism in Bandon, when religion was not honourable in the eyes of a world lying in wickedness. She had to endure the sarcasms and reproaches of those who were allied to her by the flesh ; but pressed onward to the skies, regardless of difficulties and obstructions, till, like a shock of corn, fully ripe, she was gathered into the garner of God.

Kinsale
 The travellers then rode to Kinsale, and at noon went to the market-place, where the windows were filled with spectators, and many wild-looking people stood in the street, while the servant of God earnestly invited them all to the Great Supper. " It was fallow ground, yet the word was not all lost ; several settled into serious attention, others expressed their approbation, and a few wept." In the evening the multitude so trod on one another, that it was some time before they could settle to hear. Mr. Wesley received a blow with a stone on the side of his head, and called on the person who had thrown it to stand forth, and if he had done him any wrong to strike him again. This little circumstance only increased the attention of the people, as the preacher lifted up his voice like a trumpet, and shewed them their transgressions and the way to be saved from them. They received his words, and spoke well of the truth. Even the Romanists owned that none could find fault with what he said. Only one did most bitterly curse him and all that should ever pray for him. Next day the rain drove them into the market place, where a multitude collected. Several of the better class of the Roman Catholics were also present and a whole army of soldiers, and all listened with profound attention. " The love of Christ crucified bore down all before it." A lady who belonged to the Church of Rome insisted on the servant of God going to her house, and assured him that Mr. Walter Bowler, the Sovereign or Governor of the town, had issued orders that none should dare to disturb him. It is worth observing that in Kinsale every denomination of Christians claimed Mr. Wesley as their's. The Presbyterians said he was a Dissenter, the Episcopalians that he was a Churchman, and the Romanists were sure that he was a good Catholic in his heart.

Here he wrote to Mr. Blackwell as follows: "The harvest truly is plenteous: and these fields are white unto harvest. High and low, rich and poor, approve, and many taste the good word of grace. I preached here yesterday for the first time, and cried again in the market-place, 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.' This morning God struck the hard rock, and the waters flowed. I passed three days of this week at Bandon, a large town of all Protestants, and they all stretched out their hands unto the pardoning God. Cork is all on fire for and with the Gospel. Multitudes would thus be added to the Church, if we had but a place to preach in. The weather will quickly drive us out of the field, and we have no winter quarters. A friendly Quaker offers us ground to build on. Our well-wishers have begun a subscription. Your vote and interest are desired. And pray pack up my brother also, and send him over by the first ship."

Soon after C. Wesley's return to Cork, a man and his wife laid hold on him and said, "We have followed you from Bandon to Kinsale and hither: and if we had not found you here, our hearts are so warm toward you, we would have followed you to Dublin, and all the world over." They so urged him to come once more to Bandon, that he could not refuse. Accordingly he went again, and says, "My poor woman and her husband soon found me out, and carried me to their house in triumph." It seems most probable, that this couple were Mr. and Mrs. Needham. The neighbours flocked in, and they had a feast of love. A prodigal came, who had been a monster of wickedness for many years, but now returned to his heavenly Father. By conversing with a woman, originally a Protestant, who had been a Romanist for twenty years, Mr. Wesley drew from her the confession that she never could rightly believe that any man could forgive her sins: and persuading her that Jesus Christ has the power, she at once returned to those who preach forgiveness in His blood. During the day he invited above four thousand to partake of the blessings of the Gospel, and God gave them the hearing ear. He afterwards went to the house of Mrs. Jones, the widow of Mr. John Jones, who had been twice Provost of the town, and says that she was as teachable as a little child, and determined

to promote the work of God to the utmost of her power. He soon learned, however, that bigotry and jealousy could not pass him by even in this loyal Protestant town. On the previous Sunday crowds had flocked to the church, which some of them had never troubled for years. But what did they hear? "We send them to church," he says, "to hear ourselves railed at, and what is worse, the truth of God."

He then rode again to Kinsale, where the minister, Dr. Parkinson, instead of rejoicing to see so many in his church, entertained them with a railing accusation against Charles Wesley, "as an impostor, incendiary, and messenger of Satan." Strange justice, that Dr. Parkinson should be considered a friend of the Church, and C. Wesley an enemy, who sent hundreds there for him to drive them out again! At Middleton the zealous evangelist preached to an attentive congregation, who pressed him much to visit them again: and when he returned the Town-hall could not contain his audience. At Youghal he went forth to the strand, where a wild multitude following, almost crushed him and one another to death. As he described the Lord's passion, the waves subsided, the noise ceased, and they listened with deep attention. The minister here testified his satisfaction, saying, "These gentlemen have done a great deal of good. There is need enough of them in Youghal."

In all these places societies were formed, which still continue; but in Bandon especially Methodism prospered. All classes welcomed the glad tidings of salvation, and many were turned from darkness to light, and gave God the glory.

On Sunday afternoon, September 18th, Charles Wesley went out, sick and weak, to the Marsh at Cork, for the last time. Above ten thousand persons stood fixed in deep attention, as he faintly read his text, Acts ii, 42, and urged them to walk as the first followers of Christ. His words sank into their hearts, and for two hours they wept and rejoiced together, commending each other again and again to God.

Early on the following morning C. Wesley, accompanied by R. Swindells, went to Cashel, where their host, "a serious Romanist, and his neighbour, a hearty, loving Quaker," made them welcome. At Templemore they met several of the clergy,

who had come to attend a confirmation by the Archbishop of Cashel, and Mr. Wesley preached at the door of the inn. He arrived at Roscrea wearied with his journey, but the people eager to hear would scarce give him time to rest. Proceeding onward he preached at Mountmellick, in the Market-house, to a crowd of "poor convinced sinners," who received the Word as souls thirsting for God. At Birr, as he preached, the power of the Highest overshadowed them, one lady was led to the Saviour, and most of the hearers seemed much affected. At Aughrim, he preached in a barn of Mrs. Wade's, and "seldom with greater power." At Athlone, all opposition being at an end, he preached in the Market-house, and met the Society in a house, kindly lent by a well-disposed Roman Catholic, to the great dissatisfaction of his co-religionists. The membership then amounted to upwards of two hundred. At the Sunday evening service, he says, the great blessing came, and the place rang with the cries of "Mercy, mercy!" He concluded, and began again and again, not knowing how to end the service. At Tyrrell's Pass he found much unction in the application of the words—"Behold I stand at the door and knock." He arrived in Dublin on the night of the 27th, found the Society in a flourishing condition, and set sail for England on October 8th, the voyage proving a most tempestuous and perilous one. *CW leaves Ireland*

Very soon after Charles Wesley left Cork, a spirit of prejudice and hostility against Methodism arose in the city. A dark cloud was gathering, which was about to burst on the Methodists, in persecution the most outrageous and destructive. Even when the devoted evangelist was in the city, there were faint indications of what was coming, notwithstanding his apparent popularity. So early as August 21st he writes, "Some of our clergy, and all the Catholic priests, take wretched pains to hinder their people from hearing us." Innumerable stories were invented to stop the work, and all manner of wickedness was charged against the Methodists. Their views were misrepresented, their motives traduced, and their character and conduct grossly maligned. An able letter, a copy of which lies before us, was written by a Methodist hearer, in reply to one of these unjustifiable attacks made by a clergyman of the Established Church. In this document the writer strongly asserts

the disinterested zeal and scriptural views of the preachers, and the mercenary spirit of their clerical opponents, and expresses a desire that "the lazy, imperious shepherds would mind their flocks," so that there would be no need for procuring from others "what ought to be obtained from those who were too well paid for the little they did."

J. Reeves also published a pamphlet, entitled, "An Affectionate Address to the Inhabitants of Corke," being an attempt to remove the prejudices which had arisen against the Society, by expressing their sincere and earnest desire to promote the real welfare of the people. Thus the clergy of all denominations incurred a terrible responsibility, not only by their hostility to Methodism (to which the Bishop was a party), but especially by the false and slanderous statements they circulated. The seeds thus sown sprang up and brought forth an awful harvest of blasphemy, pillage, and bloodshed.

The following hymn was composed by Charles Wesley, as a thanksgiving for the success of the Gospel in Ireland during this year :—

"Rise, ye ransom'd sinners, rise
Friends and neighbours to the skies;
Ye, by Jesu's blood brought near,
Ye to Jesu's Father dear;
Sing with me, give thanks, rejoice;
Make to God a cheerful noise;
I the wandering sheep have found,
Earth and heaven with praise resound!

"I (yet O not I, but He
Through my weakest ministry),
On the brink of the great deep,
Jesus found His wandering sheep
Who their heavenly Owner was,
He hath mark'd them with His cross;
He who paid their price of old,
Now hath brought them to His fold.

"Jesus, God o'er all supreme,
We ere long shall reign with Him,
In celestial glory stand
With the sheep at His right hand;
Join the bright angelic throng,
Shout the new triumphant song,
Face to face our Shepherd see,
Gaze to all eternity."

Chapter III.

1749.

THE year 1749 is memorable, not only for the numerous and valuable providential openings for preaching the Gospel which were presented, but also for blessed triumphs of redeeming grace, such as were won in the conversion of Thomas Walsh, Samuel Simpson, Mrs. Eliza Bennis, Mrs. Myles, and many others, whose talents were fully and successfully devoted to God. While at Cork that persecution arose which continued so long and proved so destructive.

The beginning of the year found the Methodists labouring zealously in various parts of the south of Ireland. In Athlone an old malt-house was secured for the services, and decently fitted up with two rows of benches and a pulpit, and a very important work was commenced amongst the military. ^{Exits} A regiment of Highlanders was quartered in the town, one of the soldiers of which was a noted pugilist, who on account of the unusual size of his powerful hands, received the sobriquet, "Shoulder of mutton fist." A number of the men having agreed to beat, if not kill, the Methodist preacher, and to abuse and disperse the congregation, this man was chosen as their ringleader. They went in a body to the preaching room, and he went in first to commence the attack by pulling the preacher out of the pulpit. The singing had begun, and they found some difficulty in getting forward, the place being crowded, and his companions urged him to push on; but he replied, "Let us wait to hear the singing out." That being ended, and prayer having commenced, they again called on him to go on; but he answered, "No, wait till they have finished the prayer," which being concluded, they pressed him again to push through to the pulpit. "Stay," said he, "let us hear the text," and this being announced, he continued, "Let us hear a little of what the man has to say."

The fact was the hand of the Lord was upon him, and he trembled and quailed under a strong sense of the Divine displeasure. The preacher had not proceeded far in his discourse, when the Highlander interrupted him, but in a very different way from what he had intended. For, falling on his knees and roaring aloud for the anguish and terror of his soul, he confessed before all the people that he had come there with a full determination to maim and abuse the preacher, if not to murder him; and earnestly entreated that he would forgive and pray for him. This request was immediately complied with. The other soldiers seemed thunderstruck, several of them were powerfully affected, while for a considerable time, both preacher and people united in pouring out their souls in prayer on their behalf. Next morning, while the preacher, probably Mr. Larwood, was at breakfast, a note was given to him to the following effect: "O man of God, pray for the lost sinner A—— B——." That evening the writer of the laconic epistle was at preaching, accompanied by several of his comrades. There being a love-feast afterwards, he begged so earnestly to be allowed to remain, that they could not deny him; and before the conclusion of the service, he obtained a sense of pardon, and was filled with peace and joy in believing. His subsequent spirit and conduct proved that the change was genuine, his former sinful practices being resolutely abandoned. Soon, however, he met with a powerful temptation to fight, a man having come a considerable distance to challenge him. To this he was urged on by some gentlemen who wanted amusement, and who offered a sum of money as a prize to the victor; but they failed, as he gave them clearly to understand, he was determined to have nothing more to do with prize-fighting. His adversary, however, would take no denial, but continued to annoy him with reproaches, till at length, seeing no other way to get rid of him, he said, "If you insist on fighting with me, then give me your hand." This he immediately did, when the Highlander gave it such a squeeze as made the man roar, and effectually cured him of further ambition to enter into conflict with him. After this the Christian soldier had no more trouble in that line. Many of the regiment from that time attended the

preaching of the Word, several were converted, and a good class was formed of these soldiers of the cross. The regiment was very soon after removed to Limerick, where these brave men did an important work for their Master and for Methodism.

Having probably heard of the removal of the Highlanders, Mr. Swindells, in the spirit of Christian evangelism, resolved to invade that city—being then *en route* from the midland counties to Cork. When engaging in this enterprise, he knew no one in Limerick, and was without a single friend except the soldiers to whom we have referred. On St. Patrick's day, as the streets were thronged with people returning from mass, he bravely stood up at the Castle gate, on the King's parade, and opened his commission, proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation to the benighted Catholics and Protestants of the city. This required no ordinary amount of courage; and had it not been for the Highlanders, "who were men fit to appear before princes," the preacher would probably have been torn to pieces by the incensed mob, who followed him through the streets to the place of meeting, hallooing and sometimes personally insulting him. Nothing daunted, however, the devoted evangelist announced for another service in the evening, when a still larger audience assembled. During the service, a young man, who had been trained a strict Roman Catholic, but whose intelligent and melancholy countenance betrayed an unsettled and inquiring mind, took his stand amid the throng, attracted not more by the novelty of the scene than by the hope that some word appropriate to his religious anxiety, would be uttered by the preacher. The text was, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;" and the sermon, applied by the Good Spirit, proved a healing balm to his wounded soul, and resulted in his conversion to Protestantism and to Christ. That young man was Thomas Walsh, a native of Ballylin, in the parish of Croagh, Co. Limerick, then in his nineteenth year; and the light he thus received proved to be the dawn of a new day, both in his own history and in the life-history of multitudes in Ireland. If the labours of Swindells had been attended with no other result than this one conversion, his name would deserve a prominent and most honourable place in this history. But, thank God,

the zealous evangelist had many more seals to his ministry. The following conversions were almost as remarkable as the one just mentioned.

There was present at the evening service Mrs. Eliza Bennis, whose mind was deeply impressed. In about a month afterwards when Mr. Swindells again visited the city and formed a class, she was the first to join the Society, and became one of the most devoted and useful of its members.

Mr. Swindells was very soon followed in Limerick by Mr. Williams, to whose preaching Thomas Walsh listened with deep and growing interest, and under one of whose sermons Mrs. Myles, mother of the Rev. Wm. Myles, was awakened to a sense of her sinful and dangerous state, and led not only to join the Society, but to enter upon a course of exemplary piety, which she pursued for no less than sixty-five years.

Soon after having thus introduced Methodism into Limerick, Mr. Swindells was led to a similar work in Waterford. During the course of the spring he took his stand on a fountain, built of stone, then in the centre of Arundel square, and preached the first sermon delivered by a Methodist in the city. The place was well chosen : the speaker's voice could be heard with ease not only by the dense crowd which surrounded him, but also by many at door steps and windows on every side. He was not, however, permitted to speak without disturbance : a riotous mob assembled and manifested a determination to pull him down, while another party cried out—“He is a fine, handsome fellow, and no one shall interrupt or insult him.” At last he was enabled to conclude in peace. Then a number of the most serious of the hearers gathered round him, and having received an explanation of the nature and design of his mission, were formed into a society-class. One of these was Mr. John Chambers (the maternal grandfather of the late Rev. S. Wood), a native of the county of Down, who had settled in the city about a year previously. His mind was so deeply impressed with the truths to which he had listened, that he resolved from that time to devote himself unreservedly to the service of God. He took Mr. Swindells to his house, which thenceforward, for many years, was the home of the Methodist preachers in their visits to the city.

Early on the morning of April 16th, the Rev. J. Wesley, accompanied by Wm. Tucker, one of his itinerants, and Grace Murray, arrived in Ireland for the third time. Having walked from Dunleary,* he arrived at Skinner's alley, Dublin, before the early morning service, and at once entered upon his work by conducting it. On examining the Society he found the members numbered four hundred and forty-nine, being an increase of forty-nine since his previous visit. A few days after he set out with Mr. Swindells and Mrs. Murray for Tyrrell's Pass, on his usual tour through the country. At Edenderry the congregations were composed principally of Quakers, to whom he preached on the appropriate text, "They shall be all taught of God." Several expressed a wish to be present at the meeting of the Society, when the Spirit of God descended in mighty power. Mr. Wesley also preached in the morning before leaving, after which one of the Friends invited the itinerants to his house, and was "quite loving and open-hearted." In Mountmellick, the Society is said to have been the largest in Ireland, next to those of Dublin and Cork. Mr. Swindells then went to Killucan, at the earnest request of a gentleman who came thence on purpose, to desire a preacher might be sent: and both there and in the neighbouring towns his ministry was greatly owned of God.

Having preached at Tullamore and Clara, Mr. Wesley came to Athlone, where he had a large congregation, including seven or eight officers and many soldiers of the regiment, to which John Nelson had been attached, and was then quartered in the town. Amongst those converted during this visit was Mr. Joseph Charles, of Drumcree, who had been for many years notorious for profane swearing, drinking, and all kinds of vice; but having become anxious about his soul, rode fifteen Irish miles to Tyrrell's Pass to hear Mr. Wesley, and arrived there in time for the early morning service at five o'clock. Here his convictions of sin were deepened, and being scarcely able to eat, drink or sleep, he followed the evangelist to Athlone, where in answer to earnest persevering prayer, God wiped away his tears; so that he returned home rejoicing, and declaring what great things the Lord had done for his soul.

* Now called Kingstown.

At Aughrim Mr. Wesley found a serious congregation from all the country round, having preached to whom, he explained the nature and design of the Society. The first who desired to become a member was Mr. S. Simpson, whose example was followed by his wife and daughter. This gentleman was a magistrate, who then resided at Oatfield. On Mr. Wesley's previous visit to the neighbourhood he had invited him to dinner, and for many years subsequent to this continued a steady friend and generous benefactor to Methodism.

Mr. Wesley then visited Ahascragh, where in order that the Roman Catholics might hear, he preached out of doors, and they listened with fixed and earnest attention. Accompanied by Mr. Wade, he rode to Eyrecourt, and preached in the Market-house, "a large handsome room," to a well-behaved congregation. Thence he went to Birr, where the audience, though numerous, seemed unconcerned; but next day, having spoken more strongly to them, "the congregation had quite another appearance." At Nenagh he had not intended to preach, but one of the dragoons quartered there would take no denial, so he went to the Market-place, and in a short time such a congregation assembled as he had not seen since leaving Athlone.

At Limerick he preached at Mardyke to about two thousand people, all of whom seemed to listen with deep attention; and again on the following morning, to about six or seven hundred persons, in the remains of an old abbey, which the Society had secured and fitted up for a place of worship. He met the class of soldiers, eight of whom were the Highlanders already referred to. Of the work in the city he says: "The more I converse with this people, the more I am amazed. That God hath wrought a great work is manifest. And yet the main of them, believers and unbelievers, are not able to give a rational account of the plainest principles of religion. It is plain God begins His work at the heart; then the inspiration of the Highest giveth understanding."

Having remained in the city between two and three weeks, he set out for Cork, calling at Bruff, Kilmallock, and Kildorrery, and not resting until he arrived at Rathcormack, where he was heartily received by the Rev. R. Lloyd. Mr.

Wesley preached here on the evening of the day on which he arrived, when many Roman Catholics ventured into the church, and formed "a very serious part of the congregation." Next day at the forenoon service "the hearts of the people seemed to be as melting wax," and in the evening the congregation was larger than ever. "Never," he says, "since I came into this kingdom was my soul so refreshed as both in praying for them, and calling them to accept the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." At the close of this service, Mr. Skelton arrived from Cork, with the intelligence that the storm which had been gathering in that city had at length burst forth with terrific fury.

For duration and intensity it may be doubted whether the annals of Methodism supply anything like a parallel to these infamous riots. They commenced on May 3rd, when Nicholas Butler, a worthless ballad singer, dressed in a parson's gown and bands, went through the streets with ballads in one hand and a Bible in the other, calling upon the people to arise and exterminate the Methodist heretics. A large mob was thus assembled. Mr. Thomas Jones, a merchant of the city, and one of the leading members of the Society, at once went to the Mayor, Mr. Daniel Crone, and requested him to put a stop to the riot, but his worship declined to interfere. Being thus left free to do as they pleased, the mob attacked the Methodists while coming out of the house where they had met for a religious service, calling them heretic dogs and other opprobrious names, and pelting them with mud. On the following evening, waxing bold with impunity, they assembled in still larger numbers, and again attacked the congregation with stones, clubs, and swords: so that the lives of both preachers and people were in imminent danger. On May 5th the mob was greater than ever. The Mayor, though seeing numbers of the people covered with dirt and blood, refused again to interfere; and the two sheriffs of the city having entered the preaching room, drove the congregation out among the rioters and nailed up the doors. With others John Stockdale was beaten and severely cut, and his wife thrown to the ground and almost murderously abused. On each of the ten following days, Butler and his rabble assembled before

the house of Daniel Sullivan, a baker, beat and abused his customers, broke his windows and destroyed his goods, the Mayor being an apparently indifferent spectator. Not content with this, for another fortnight the rioters daily gathered in front of Sullivan's shattered dwelling, and threatened to pull it down. He applied once more to the Mayor for protection, but his worship answered—"It is your own fault for entertaining those preachers: if you will turn them out of your house I will engage there shall be no more harm done; but if you will not turn them out, you must take what you will get." Upon this the mob set up a loud huzza, and threw stones more vigorously than ever. Sullivan said—"This is fine usage under a Protestant government; if I had a priest saying mass in every room of it, my house would not be touched." The Mayor replied—"The priests are tolerated, but you are not;" and the mob thus encouraged continued throwing stones till midnight.

Mr. Wesley having been informed that it was impossible for him to preach in Cork then, resolved to ride straight through it to Bandon. According to what was his invariable practice, when apprehensive of danger, he arrived before the hour at which he was expected, yet as he entered the city, the streets, doors and windows *en route* were filled with spectators, but the mob had not time to gather until he was beyond their reach.

He entered Bandon on May 31st and preached in the evening in front of the Market-house, the large space there being very suitable for open-air services. It was here his brother Charles had preached, and many of the early itinerants were wont to take their stand in the same place. Here also on the three following days Mr. Wesley preached, morning and evening, to by far the largest congregations he had seen in Ireland. One day a clergyman came twelve miles to converse with him, and without any dispute they "simply endeavoured to strengthen each other's hands in God." The same evening a lady informed him that Dr. St. John Brown, rector of Kilbrogan, had averred to her and many others—"1. That both John and Charles Wesley had been expelled the University of Oxford long ago. 2. That there was not a Methodist

left in Dublin or anywhere in Ireland but Cork and Bandon, all the rest having been rooted out by order of the government. 3. That neither were there any Methodists left in England. And 4. That it was all Jesuitism at the bottom." At the close of the Saturday evening sermon, Mr. Wesley, "at the request of many in the town" answered for himself, and had "reason to believe it was blessed to many of the congregation." The following day, though he was extremely hoarse, and could not speak without difficulty, he preached at nine, at two, and at five, "the congregation continually increasing." During this visit he was the guest of Mr. Hawes, a respectable man, who resided in the middle of South Main street. On leaving Bandon Mr. Wesley did not return to Cork, but went to Blarney, where many of the Methodists of the adjoining city met him: and having spent some time with them in exhortation and prayer, he proceeded to Rathcormack, where he heard a rumour that the Methodists placed all religion in wearing long beards. While here he wrote "A Short Address to the Inhabitants of Ireland, Occasioned by some late Occurrences," which was soon after published in Dublin. In it he alludes to the recent labours of the Methodists, and answers two questions: First, what are the Methodists, what do they teach, and what are the effects of their teaching? And secondly, in what manner ought a Christian, a moralist, a philanthropist, and a patriot act towards them?

At Bruff Mr. Wesley preached to "some stocks and stones," and then got back to Limerick, where he spent "four comfortable days with this lively people," the like of whom he "had not found in all the kingdom." Having arranged to preach at Nenagh, he was obliged to leave, and, for want of better accommodation, was glad to ride on horseback behind an honest man who overtook him while trudging on foot. At Gloster, near Shinrone, he preached in the saloon of a private mansion. At Ferbane he went successively to two different inns, where he intended to dine, but found that "they did not care to entertain heretics." Again reaching Athlone, he preached in "the new built house," and towards the close of the sermon inquired, "Which of you will give yourself, soul and body, to God?" A Mrs. Glass responded, with a cry that

almost shook the house, "I will! I will!" Presently another witnessed the same resolution; and not long after a Mrs. Meecham, who had been sorrowing as one without hope, lifted up her head with joy, singing and praising God. The service was then turned into what proved a very protracted revival meeting, the whole congregation continuing in prayer, all their hearts being as the heart of one man. When Mr. Wesley at length pronounced the benediction, not one rose to leave, and they continued wrestling with the Lord in prayer until several others found peace and joy in believing. On returning to the town, two or three days subsequently, he met the Society, when many cried aloud for mercy, and they called upon God till several found the blessing, and praised the Lord with a good courage. Mr. Wesley says he thought "more had found peace with God in these four days, than in sixteen months before."

At Aughrim he "endeavoured to awaken a serious but sleepy congregation." At Tyrrell's Pass he did not find that fervour of spirit in the people which obtained among them in the former year, yet there were a few who panted after holiness. Having preached at Rahugh and Tullamore, he dined at Mountmellick, with Joseph Fry, formerly a Quaker, but now a Methodist. "Abundance of people were at the preaching in the evening," all of whom seemed to give earnest attention; still more were present next morning, when "God's Word was a two-edged sword;" and on returning, the same spirit of earnestness continued, so that his voice was drowned in the cries of those who sought mercy, and the songs of those who praised the God of their salvation. At Portarlinton he was heartily welcomed by a clergyman who some time before had been requested to preach against the Methodists, but replied, he could not till he knew what they were. In order to this he went and heard Mr. Larwood preach, and was so favourably impressed that from that time, instead of preaching against them, spoke on their behalf wherever he went. Mr. Wesley preached in the Market-house, and says he "had not seen so glittering a company before, unless at St. Mary's church, Dublin, and yet all of them, high and low, behaved in such a manner as became His presence, before whom they

stood." On returning the congregation was even larger, and all "seemed to hear not only with strong desire, but with the understanding also;" and on explaining the nature of a Society, and desiring any who were willing to unite together to speak to him, about sixty did so. On returning two days later, he "scarce knew how to leave off" speaking, "all the people seemed to be so deeply affected." He found not only that the Society had increased to one hundred members, "full of zeal and good desires;" but also that "the face of the whole town was changed." Open wickedness was not seen, the fear of God was on every side, and rich and poor inquired, "What must I do to be saved?"

At Closeland, in the parish of Lea, he was the guest of a Mr. Laborde, and preached in the open-air. Although it rained heavily the whole time the congregation regarded it not. In Edenderry, at the meeting of the Society, the Spirit's influence seemed to descend in melting power, a cry arose on every side, and Joseph Fry, once as eminent a sinner as his namesake of Mountmellick, and afterwards as eminent an instance of the grace of God—broke out into prayer, when praises and prayers commingled until all were "lost in wonder, love and praise." On July 5th Mr. Wesley returned to Dublin, and in preaching on the Green found the congregations considerably larger than any he had seen in Dublin before.

During this tour he was accompanied not only by Mr. Swindells, but also Grace Murray, who was to him both a friend and a fellow-helper in the Gospel. She ministered to his wants, settled the female bands, visited the sick, and prayed with the mourners, many of whom received remission of sins during her conversation and prayer.* Mr. Wesley says he had the satisfaction to find that ever since he was in Ireland first, his fellow-labourers had been fully employed in watering the seed that had been sown, and it had pleased God to bless their labours exceedingly in Munster as well as in Leinster. In various parts of both these provinces considerable numbers were brought from darkness into light, and from serving the devil to serve the living God.

* *Tyerman's Life and Times of Wesley*, II, p. 50.

While in the metropolis Wesley published "A Letter to a Roman Catholic," doubtless the result of his intercourse with numerous members of that Church; and intended to remove the bitter prejudice and unreasonable views they entertained with regard to Protestants, and foster a spirit of peace and love, by showing the great truths held in common by Romanists and their co-religionists.

* On July 20 he set sail for England, having been in Ireland for a little more than nine weeks. Soon after leaving he received two letters giving most cheering accounts of the Lord's work in this country. The first was from J. Reeves, with details of a blessed revival in the midland counties. At Athlone many obtained a sense of the pardoning love of God, and the Society in general was athirst for the blessings of salvation. At one of the meetings in Aughrim the governess of Mr. Simpson's children was struck to the ground in penitence of spirit, and in a short time filled with peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. At another service the steward was pricked to the heart, fell on his knees in earnest prayer before the whole congregation, and was enabled to return home rejoicing in the favour of God. Thus the whole Society was quickened to spiritual life and fervour. The sacred flame spread, so that similar glorious results attended the preaching of the word at Portarlinton, Mountmellick and Rahugh. Mr. Reeves specially notices the power of sympathy in connexion with this work, that when any obtained peace in believing, an opportunity being afforded them of publicly acknowledging it, others found the same blessing, and thus the holy fire spread.

The Rev. Richard Lloyd writes that his church at Rathcormack was more largely attended than it had ever been, that there was greater attention and earnestness in the congregation, and that the Methodist Society in his parish not only kept up well, but was considerably increased.

In the meantime, however, the itinerants had entered into a new, neglected, but also a most encouraging field of Christian work, and one which, as the sequel shows, produced a very extensive and glorious harvest.

[Early in the eighteenth century a large number of the people of the Palatinate, on the Rhine, owing to the cruel and

CHAPTER III.—1749.

unjust treatment they had received from Louis XIV., settled in Ireland; a few in the county of Kerry, and other parts of the country, but the main body in the county of Limerick. Being for nearly half a century without pastors who could speak their language, they became thoroughly demoralized, noted for drunkenness, profanity, and utter neglect of religion. At length, in 1749, one day during summer Mr. Williams preached in the streets of Limerick, surrounded by a vast crowd. Many of the Palatines from Newmarket being in the city at the Assizes, joined the audience, and heard the Word preached with great delight. At the close of the service a few of them met together, and said one to another, "This is like the preaching we used to hear in Germany." Hence they were led to hear again, and ultimately invited the preacher and his zealous associates to visit their little town. One of the first thus led to become identified with Methodism was Philip Guier, the teacher of the German school at Ballingarrane,* whose wise counsels were very helpful to Thomas Walsh; and who subsequently became a local preacher, and was highly esteemed amongst his religious friends and neighbours for his consistent piety, fidelity and zeal. It is a remarkable fact that after the lapse of more than a century, the name of this man was as fresh in the place of his nativity as it ever had been; for then even Romanists as well as Protestants were accustomed to salute the Methodist minister as he jogged along on his horse, and to say, "There goes Philip Guier, who drove the devil out of Ballingarrane." In Newmarket a class was formed, of which, on September 29th, Thomas Walsh became an attached member.

On another occasion, two women residing at Courtmatrix had a dispute, and bitter words followed, till one of them, having heard of a court in Limerick which took cognizance of abusive language, set off to the city determined to have revenge. Arriving too late, she waited until the following day, and while walking through the city, heard singing in Quay lane. A spirit of curiosity led her to the place, where a sermon was preached, which reached her conscience. She returned home, told her neighbours what she had heard, and invited

* Now called Ballingrane.

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them to go to Limerick to hear for themselves, which they did. This resulted, in the good Providence of God, in the introduction of Methodism into Courtmatrix, another Palatine settlement.

Encouraged by these openings, Mr. Swindells one Sabbath visited Rathkeale, and as the people came out of church commenced a service in the open-air, and then moved into a yard followed by the congregation. A lady of large fortune, a Miss D——, joined the audience, heard attentively, and was led to decide for God, so that her family became attached to Methodism, and attentive to the preachers.

* In Cork the base and heartless persecution still continued. On May 31st, the day that Wesley passed through the city, Butler and his gang assembled at the preaching room, broke open the doors, and having beaten and wounded many of the congregation unmercifully, tore up the pews, benches, and floor, and burnt them in the open street. Thus daily, for weeks together, law was set at defiance, and war declared against the Methodists and all who ventured to attend their services. It was dangerous for any member of the Society to be seen abroad. The gang of ruffians went from house to house, abusing, threatening, and maltreating the people at their pleasure. Some of the women narrowly escaped being killed. The itinerants preached at the peril of life; but they counted not their lives dear to them, so that they might win souls. The poor people considering it was useless to oppose Butler and his confederates, patiently endured whatever they thought proper to inflict till the Assizes, when a sufficient though late relief was expected. Accordingly, on August 19th twenty-eight depositions against the rioters were laid before the Grand Jury; but all of them were thrown out by these worthy gentlemen, who then, in violation of law and usage, assumed the character of accusers, and even specified the sentence they wished passed upon the accused, and all this without a trial or even an indictment. "We find and present," said these guardians of the peace, "Charles Wesley to be a person of ill-fame, a vagabond, and a common disturber of his Majesty's peace, and we pray he may be transported." Messrs. Williams, Swindells, Reeves, Wheatley, Larwood, Cownley, Skelton, and

Tucker—who had laboured in the city—together with Daniel Sullivan, had each a similar honour. Well might J. Wesley pronounce this memorable presentment, “worthy to be preserved in the annals of Ireland to all succeeding generations.” C. Wesley was in London when these honoured Corkonians thus gave judgment concerning his character, and pronounced him worthy of a felon’s doom. He wrote an ode in commemoration of the event, from which the following verses are extracted :—

“Join, all the friends of Jesus, join
Your full, exulting hearts with mine;
With mine your joyful voices raise,
Attuned to our Redeemer’s praise,
Who crowns us still with victory,
And now delights to honour me.

“Me He hath counted for His name
Worthy to suffer wrong and shame;
Condemn’d for publishing my Lord,
Proscribed for ministering His word;
Untried, unheard, to exile driven,
’Gainst all the laws of earth and heaven.

“But God in our defence shall stand,
And shield us with His own right hand;
The Lord, whom on our side we have,
Shall from unrighteous judges save,
His injured messengers confess,
And give His suffering people peace.

“Wherefore of Him His people boasts,
The Prince of peace, the Lord of hosts;
Our Strength and Confidence and Tower,
Our Light in Satan’s darkest hour,
Our Glory in reproach and shame,
Our Guide and Saviour in the flame.”

The action of the Grand Jury, of course, gave Butler greater licence than ever. He and his mob, flushed with victory, scoured the streets day and night, frequently shouting as they went along, “Five pounds for a Swaddler’s head,” their ring-leader declaring that he had full liberty to do whatever he would, even to murder if he pleased. For months he seemed to reign triumphant in the city, and the Methodists were subjected to horrible outrages. But the more the persecuted people were oppressed, like the Israelites in Egypt, the more they multiplied and grew.

At the Conference held in London on November 16th, the

whole of Ireland was appointed one circuit, under the care of J. Haughton and J. Reeves.

A few days after the Conference, the Rev. G. Whitefield wrote to Mr. Lunell, stating that the Countess of Huntingdon had written to him to the following effect: "I hope the poor persecuted people in Cork will be helped, and I should be glad if you could write in my name to any of them, and inform them that I would have written myself, but I knew not how to direct. You may give them my kind assurance of serving them upon any occasion, and a hint that I believe they will meet with no more of the like rough usage." Whether owing to some influence thus brought to bear on the authorities in Cork, or to the storm having in some measure spent itself, there was at this period a temporary lull, during which Butler went to Dublin, in hope of raising a similar spirit there; but in this he completely failed, as the people of the metropolis would not listen either to his songs or his scurrility.

Chapter XV.

1750.

ON January 3rd, 1750, the Rev. George Whitefield writes, "Mr. Lunell sends me dreadful news from Cork. Butler is there again, making havoc of the people. Mr. Haughton expected to be murdered every minute some time ago." The infamous ballad-singer had reassembled his mob, who, with swords, clubs and pistols, assailed and cruelly maltreated any Methodist who crossed their path. Complaint of this was made to the recently elected Mayor, Mr. William Holmes, but no attempt was made in the locality to suppress the riots, or defend this persecuted people.

Friends however were raised up elsewhere, who exerted themselves to the utmost on behalf of the Cork Methodists. Mr. Lunell, availing himself of the kind offer of assistance made by the Countess of Huntingdon, prepared a statement of the indignities and cruelties suffered, and forwarded copies to her ladyship and Mr. Whitefield. Lady Huntingdon, being then

at Donnington Park, in Leicestershire, requested the latter to wait on the Speaker of the House of Commons, in her name, and demand redress. He did so on Monday, January 8th, being introduced by Dr. Andrew Gifford, the respected minister of the Baptist chapel, Eagle street, London, and was received with much courtesy. The Speaker "expressed great resentment at the indignities the poor sufferers had underwent;" and added that the Earl of Harrington, who was then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and the Duke of Newcastle and the Earl of Chesterfield, the joint Secretaries of State, were the proper persons to be applied to, by whom her ladyship might expect to have the grievances redressed. Accordingly a well attested narrative of the persecutions was presented to the Lord Lieutenant; the matter was brought before the Secretaries of State, who expressed great displeasure at the proceedings of the magistrates and clergy of Cork; and through Lady Huntingdon's influence a memorial was likewise presented by the Countess of Chesterfield to his Majesty the King.

Notwithstanding all these efforts little relief apparently was obtained, and that was of very brief duration. On January 27th Mr. Whitefield writes, "I am glad to find the storm is a little abated at Cork. I always thought it was too hot to last long." But from the beginning of February to the end of that month it raged as furiously as ever. Butler, helped by his mob, was as violent in spirit, and as destructive and cruel in conduct as heretofore. He several times assaulted the house of William Jewell, a clothier; and ultimately having taken forcible possession of it, swore he would blow out the brains of the first who resisted him, beat Mrs. Jewell, and then smashed all the windows. He abused Mary Philips in the grossest terms, and then struck her on the head, and stunned her. Elizabeth Gardelet, the wife of a soldier, was not only called the grossest names, but literally almost murdered; and several others were similarly maltreated. At the Lent Assizes, held in April, the depositions of the more recent sufferers among the persecuted Methodists were laid before the Grand Jury, but were all rejected, and a true bill was found against the son of Daniel Sullivan, for discharging a pistol without a ball over the heads of the mob, while they

April were pelting him with stones. All the preachers then in Ireland who, with Daniel Sullivan, had been presented as vagabonds in autumn, having assembled at the house of Mr. Jones, went from thence in a body to the Court-house, accompanied by several respectable inhabitants of the city. On the Judge inquiring who were the persons presented, and they being pointed out to him, he was for some time greatly agitated, and unable to proceed. At length he called for the evidence, and Butler entered the witness box. On his saying in reply to the first question, what is your calling, that he was a ballad-singer, the Judge lifted up his hands in surprise and said, "Here are six gentlemen indicted as vagabonds, and the first accuser is a vagabond by profession." The second witness being called, and asked the same question, he impudently answering, "I am an anti-swaddler," the Judge resented the insolence, and ordered him out of court. No other person appearing, his lordship turned to the preachers and said, "Gentlemen, there is no evidence against you, you may retire; I am sorry that you have been treated so improperly, and hope the police of this city will be better attended to for the time to come."

It was now generally believed by the friends of liberty and order that there would be no more riots in Cork; but the flame of persecution was not yet extinct. While the character and conduct of the Methodists had been vindicated, the lawless proceedings of Butler and his associates had not been punished, and therefore they still felt free to pursue their wicked course.

On the evening of April 7th, the Rev. J. Wesley arrived at * Dublin, accompanied by Christopher Hopper, one of the most powerful of the early Methodist preachers—"tall, energetic and courageous, a Boanerges to the stout-hearted, and a Barnabas to the sorrowful." Mr. Wesley found that while God had been reviving His work in the city, there had been great imprudence on the part of some of the leading members, whereby some souls had been destroyed, and others much wounded. A man named Roger Ball had insinuated himself into the Society, and been permitted to preach. He was an Antinomian of the worst description, a crafty debauchee, full of deceit, and holding the most abominable errors, by means of which he had done a large amount of mischief. Some were disposed to give up the

Sacraments, and all were inclined to drop the Tuesday and Thursday preaching services, on the ground that the Lord Jesus is the only Teacher.

Six days after his arrival, Wesley had an unexpected interview with a woman of great, though unenviable fame. She was the daughter of a Dublin physician, and when a young lady her sprightliness and charms attracted numerous admirers, and among others the Rev. Matthew Pilkington, to whom she was subsequently married. Dissension soon sprang up, which ended in separation. She then fell into a licentious life, and once was in the Marshalsea for debt. A friend obtained her release, and procured her a subscription of fifteen guineas, with which she opened a book-shop. She was the authoress of a comedy, called "The Turkish Court;" and a tragedy, entitled "The Roman Father;" as well as several poems. Her most famous production, however, was her own *Life*, written with indecent freedom, but shrewd and entertaining, and displaying extensive knowledge of the world. Dean Swift was one of her intimate friends, and had a high opinion of her talents. Wesley says, "I breakfasted with one of the Society, and found she had a lodger I little thought of. It was the famous Mrs. Pilkington, who soon made an excuse for following me up stairs. I talked with her seriously about an hour. We then sang 'Happy Magdalene.' She appeared to be exceedingly struck. How long the impression may last, God knows." She was then thirty-eight years of age; and in four months afterwards she died.*

Wesley also met a young married woman, who had been a zealous Roman Catholic, and had perverted several Protestants to her faith; but trying her hand on some Methodists, they had converted her, or at least convinced her of the great truths of the Gospel. Immediately her relatives, and especially her husband, disowned her; but she was moved by none of these things, desiring nothing on earth but to experience the faith which once she persecuted.

Having spent twelve days in Dublin, Wesley set out on an excursion through the country, accompanied by J. Reeves. At Edenderry the congregation was much larger than he expected.

* Tyerman's *Wesley*, II. pp. 77-8.

At Portarlinton he preached to almost all the gentry of the town. At Closeland he found the Society increased both numerically and spiritually. At Mountmellick the Society was much increased in grace, and yet lessened in numbers. In Tullamore, at an open-air service, many of the audience were drunk, yet they paid great attention. He rebuked the Society for their lukewarmness and covetousness ; and had the satisfaction of seeing them evince signs of penitence. At Tyrrell's Pass he found more than double the congregation he had there in the previous year, and when he met the Society had still greater reason to rejoice, finding a great part of them "walking in the light and praising God all the day long." At Athlone he preached in the morning to backsliders : and in the evening, at the Connaught side of the river, to a large congregation. During the service a man passed by on a fine prancing horse, and drew off many of the hearers. Wesley paused, and then raising his voice said, "If there are any more of you, who think it of more concern to see a dancing horse than to hear the Gospel of Christ, pray go after them." The wanderers heard the reproof, and the majority at once returned. At Ahascragh, he preached "to an exceedingly serious congregation ;" and at Aughrim "to a well meaning, sleepy people," and strove to shake some of them out of their slumbers by speaking as sharply as he could. Here the congregation at the church was such as had not been seen for twenty years. At Birr, the number of people that assembled excited the hope that more good would be done even there. In Limerick, at five in the morning, the old abbey was not only full of people, but what was far better, "full of the presence of God." And in the evening, there was not room for the congregation. He afterwards told the Society freely and plainly their faults, which they received "as became men fearing God." At Kildorrery, a clergyman would talk with him whether he would or not, and they parted in love after an hour's conversation, which resulted in his being late for the service at Rathcormack in the evening.

On May 19th Wesley rode on to Cork, where he was entertained by Alderman Pembroke, who had been Mayor of the city in 1733 ; and next morning, being Sunday, he had a large and deeply attentive congregation on Hammond's Marsh. A

few of the rabble gathered at a distance, but gradually they drew near and mixed with the congregation, so that he had "seldom seen a more quiet and orderly assembly at any church in England or Ireland." A report having spread that the Mayor intended to hinder his preaching there again in the evening, he desired Mr. Skelton and Mr. Jones to wait on his worship, and inquire concerning it. They did so, and Mr. Skelton asked if Mr. Wesley's preaching on the Marsh would be disagreeable to him, adding that if it were he would not do so. The Mayor answered, "Sir, I will have no mobbing." Mr. Skelton replied, "There was none this morning;" but his worship said, "There was. Are there not churches and meeting-houses enough? I will have no more mobs and riots." Skelton replied, "Sir, neither Mr. Wesley, nor those that heard him made either mobs or riots." But the Mayor said plainly, "I will have no more preaching; and if Mr. Wesley attempts to preach, I am prepared for him."

Wesley, unwilling to give offence, therefore relinquished his purpose of preaching out of doors, and conducted the service in the room held by the Society; but no sooner had he commenced than the Mayor came with the city drummers and an immense rabble, and continued drumming outside as long as Wesley continued preaching. On leaving he was hemmed in by the mob. Observing one of the serjeants standing by, he desired him to keep the King's peace: but the civic officer replied, "Sir, I have no orders to do that." And so amid a shower of missiles, the servant of God had to make his way through a brutish mob to the house of a Mr. Jenkins. Here a stout Romanist stood at the door to hinder his entrance; but she received a blow, intended for Wesley, that brought her to the ground, and thus he passed in.

But many of the congregation were more roughly handled, particularly Mr. Jones, who was covered with dirt, and by a merciful Providence escaped with his life. The main body of the mob then went to the preaching-room, and for at least the third time brought out the seats, pulled down the doors and window frames, tore up the floor and whatever woodwork remained, part of which they turned to their own account, and the rest they burned in the open street. It is worthy of

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note that one of the rioters having died soon after, was buried in a coffin made of two of the benches thus stolen from the Methodists.

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On May 21st Wesley rode to Bandon ; but for four hours in the afternoon the mob of Cork marched in grand procession, and then burnt him in effigy. While they were so busily employed Mr. Haughton took the opportunity of going down to the Marsh, and called at a friend's house there, where the good woman locked him in. But observing a large number of people assembled, he threw up the sash and preached to them out of the window. Many seemed deeply affected, some of whom had been persecutors before ; and they all retired to their homes before the mob had the chance to molest them. Next morning, however, the rioters were astir before five o'clock, and in the evening they went to the Marsh, and stood at a distance from the house of Mr. Stockdale, the tallow chandler, whom they had nearly murdered twelve months before, and whose wife they treated most brutally. The Mayor being sent for, came with a company of soldiers. Then, addressing the mob, he said—"Lads ! once, twice, thrice, I bid you go home. Now, I have done." Of course the lads knew how to interpret his attempt at keeping the peace, and at once proceeded to smash all Stockdale's windows. On the following day the infuriated crowd still patrolled the streets, abused all that were called Methodists, and threatened to murder them and pull down their houses. On the 24th they again assaulted Stockdale's house, broke down the boards he had nailed up against the windows, destroyed the wooden frames and shutters, and damaged a considerable part of his goods. On the 25th Roger O'Farrell put up an advertisement at the public exchange to the effect, that he was ready to march at the head of any rabble and pull down any house that harboured a Swaddler.

Mr. Wesley addressed a letter to the Mayor of Cork, contradicting some false reports, and concluded by saying—"I fear God, and honour the King. I earnestly desire to be at peace with all men. I have not willingly given any offence, either to the magistrates, the clergy, or any of the inhabitants of the city of Cork ; neither do I desire anything of them, but to be treated (I will not say as a clergyman, a gentle-

man, or a Christian, but) with such justice and humanity as are due to a Jew, a Turk, or a pagan."

Just a week after Wesley had left the city, he received intelligence from Cork of a very cheering kind. In answer to prayer, the Lord had interposed on behalf of his suffering servants in a most unexpected way. Many of the soldiers then quartered there had come under the power of the Gospel, and through their influence the mob was at last intimidated. One of the itinerants had preached under the wall of the Barracks. The city drummers came, but the soldiers assured them that if they beat their instruments, they would be cut in pieces. Then the Mayor came at the head of a mob, and having failed to raise a disturbance, he went to the commanding officer, to enlist his help, but failed again. The Colonel declared to the mob that they must make no riots. Thus the first stand for peace was taken in this long-distracted city.

*
Violence
5.25

On Mr. Wesley's return he found that little dependence could be placed in the good offices of the Colonel, as he had said that if the mob were to come and break windows in the Barracks, Mr. Wesley might have a long bill from the barrack master. However, he walked to the military quarters. The "boys" quickly gathered, and were more and more tumultuous, but in a moment all was quiet. A Mr. W— had snatched a stick out of a man's hand, and brandished it over his head, on which the whole troop ran away. Mr. Wesley then preached at the Barrack gate to a large congregation of serious people, the mob meantime standing about one hundred yards off. At the close of the service the soldiers who had kept together near the gate, took their position in front and rear of the servants of God, who, thus protected, walked through a great crowd to the house of Alderman Pembroke. By means of these soldiers the mob was kept in check, subsequently, until at the close of Mr. Holmes' year of office, his successor, Mr. Robert Wrixon, by the firm stand he took, effectually ended the intolerant and riotous proceedings which had so long disturbed and disgraced the city.

During the week of misrule and terror in which the mob, and not Mr. Holmes, ruled over Cork, Mr. Wesley was peacefully at work in Bandon, notwithstanding the unwearied

labours, both public and private, of Dr. Brown to stir up the people. It is rather singular that the very pulpit from which this rector used to fulminate his anathemas against the Methodists, was used by them many years subsequently, at the service in connexion with the laying of the foundation stone of the present chapel.

5.26 On the evening of the 26th May, while preaching in South Main street to a congregation twice as large as usual, Wesley was disgracefully interrupted. When he had spoken for about a quarter of an hour, a drunken clergyman with a large stick placed himself near the preacher, and attempted to begin a preconcerted disturbance; but before he had uttered many words two or three resolute women seized him, and pulled him into a house, expostulated with him, and then dismissed him through a garden. Here the poor maudlin cleric so fell in love with his conductor, that in order to extricate herself, she had to repel force by force, and cuff him most soundly. But the opposition was not over. A young gentleman of the town was the next champion. He was supported by two companions, who were armed with pistols. But the fate of the parson awaited him also, for some of the people bore him away, though with much gentleness and civility. That was no sooner done than the third hero of the plot came upon the scene, and with greater fury; his rage was also very brief, for a butcher, who was not a Methodist, with a few lusty blows on the head, felled him as he would an ox. This cooled his courage, especially as no one took his part. "So," says Wesley, "I quietly finished my discourse."

The little storm of opposition having thus quickly subsided, the next morning they "had such a glorious shower as usually follows a calm." At noon Wesley preached again, on "The Scripture hath concluded all under sin." The evening congregation surpassed any he had before seen in Bandon, and the service was a most impressive one.

The next day Wesley rode to Kinsale, and preached in the evening to a few gentry, many poor people and abundance of soldiers. He also revisited Rathcormack and preached in the church, in connexion with a funeral,

after Mr. Lloyd had read the usual service. This clergyman by the deep and practical sympathy he had shewn with the Wesleys and their work got into trouble. The neighbouring clergy complained to the Bishop of the diocese, Dr. George Berkeley, who directed the Archdeacon, the Rev. Michael Davies, to deliver to Lloyd an episcopal order that he must not "suffer any person to preach in his church who was not a licensed preacher of that or the neighbouring diocese." In a long and able letter to the Bishop, dated July 4, 1750, and sent as an answer to this order Mr. Lloyd remarks: 7.4
 "I confess that Mr. Wesley has preached (though seldomer than has been wished) in my church, and I thought that a fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, who is admitted to preach before the University there, and has preached in many churches in London and other parts of England, as also in Dublin, might be permitted to preach here also." He adds:—
 "The mobs at Cork and some other places in this kingdom, have obliged the Methodists to seek the protection of government, which undoubtedly they will have. Several of them, of good fortunes, to escape the persecution, are preparing to settle in England; and, because the clergy are supposed to have encouraged it, numbers of others resolve to quit our Church. At this rate, we may in a short time have only the refuse left. Religion, my lord, is now at a very low ebb in the world, and we can scarce see the outward form of it remaining. But corrupt as the world is, it is thought better that the devil should reign than that Mr. Wesley should preach, especially in a church." On the same day the Bishop replied—"I have that opinion of your prudence that I doubt not you will be cautious whom you admit into your pulpit, and that you will avoid doing or countenancing anything that may offend your brethren of the clergy, or give occasion to mobs and riots." This artful epistle accomplished the purpose. Wesley had preached for the last time in Rathcormack church. *

On June 1st the earnest evangelist rode over the mountains to Shronell, and found there a few "serious loving people," to whom he preached evening and morning, and then went to Limerick. Here he preached at Mardyke to four or five 6.1

times as many as the old abbey could hold, and on examining the Society, took particular notice of our old friends, the Methodist Highlanders, now increased to sixty, of whom he says—"Their zeal, according to knowledge, has stirred up many, and they still speak for God and are not ashamed." At Newmarket he was much cheered with the spirit of the people. Several times he found it difficult to proceed, his voice being well nigh drowned in their prayers and praises. Here he met for the first time Thomas Walsh, who was glad of the opportunity of opening his mind to him and obtaining his advice.

Walsh

Having revisited Shronell, Wesley set out for Waterford, and arrived at Grannagh ferry, about a mile from his destination, late in the evening. "At the ferry," he says, "was a lad who asked my name. When he heard it, he cried out, 'O, sir, you have no business here, you have nothing to do at Waterford! Butler has been gathering mobs there all this week, and they set upon us so that we cannot walk the streets. But if you will stay at that little house I will go and bring Mr. M'Cullagh,' one of the leading Methodists in the city, 'to you.' We stayed some time, and then thought it best to go a little on our way toward Portarlington. But the ferryman would not come over: so that, after waiting till we were weary, we made our way through some grounds and over the mountain into the Carrick road, and went on, about five miles, to a village where we found a quiet house. Sufficient for this day was the labour thereof. We were on horseback, with but an hour or two's intermission, from five in the morning till within a quarter of eleven at night. Friday, 15th.—About two in the morning I heard people making a great noise, and calling me by my name. They were some of our friends from Waterford, who informed us that, upon the lad's coming in, sixteen or eighteen of them came out to conduct me into the town. Not finding me, they returned; but the mob met them by the way, and pelted them with dirt and stones to their own doors." Soon after, Butler, having quarrelled with some of his companions, lost his right arm in the affray, and thus disabled fled to Dublin, where, according to one account, he dragged out the remainder of his life in well deserved

6.15

misery, and was actually saved from starving by the charity of the Dublin Methodists : and, according to another, he rendered himself amenable to justice, and was transported for life. *

The Rev. W. Smith relates that sixty years after, in 1810, when he was stationed in Cork, a person of the name of Murphy, of very shabby appearance, was pointed out to him as the son of a man who had headed the mob which persecuted the Methodists at this early period : and who, from wealthy circumstances became exceedingly poor and wretched. His degradation was viewed by the citizens as a judgment from God for his outrageous conduct.

Wesley now turned towards Dublin. On June 15, after the long journey of the previous day, with only five hours' rest, he started again at four o'clock in the morning, and rode about fifty Irish miles—that is not quite sixty-five English. At midnight he came to Emo, where he wished to sleep ; but the woman who kept the inn not only refused him admittance, but let loose four dogs upon him. So he rode to Ballybrittas, expecting another rough salute from a large dog in the yard ; but the brute never stirred till the hostler awoke and came out.

Next day, while resting here, he transcribed a letter written eight days before to the Rev. John Baily, A.B., rector of Kilcully, Cork, being a reply to an epistle he had received from that clergyman. Baily's slanders were of the coarsest kind. The Methodist preachers were "a parcel of vagabonds, illiterate babblers, who amused the populace with nonsense, ribaldry, and blasphemy, and not capable of writing orthography or good sense." Wesley is called a "harebrained enthusiast," and is accused of "frontless assurance, and a well-dissembled hypocrisy ;" of "promoting the cause of arbitrary Popish power ;" of "robbing and plundering the poor, so as to leave them neither bread to eat, or raiment to put on ;" and of "being the cause of all that Butler had done." Such a slanderer had no claim to mercy. Wesley reminds his antagonist that when one of the English bishops had been asked what could be done to stop these new preachers, he replied—"If they preach contrary to Scripture, confute them by Scripture ; if contrary to reason, confute them by reason. But beware you use no other weapons than these, either in opposing error, or defending the

truth," but that this method had been little thought of in Cork. "The opposition," he says, "was begun with lies of all kinds, frequently delivered in the name of God. So that never was anything so ill-judged as for you to ask, 'Does Christianity encourage its professors to make use of lies, invectives, or low, mean, and abusive scurrility, to carry on its interests?' No, sir, it does not. I disclaim and abhor every weapon of this kind. But with these have the Methodist preachers been opposed in Cork, above any other place. In England, in all Ireland, have I neither heard nor read any like those gross, palpable lies, those low Billingsgate invectives, and that inexpressibly mean abuse and base scurrility which the opposers of Methodism, so called, have continually made use of, and which has been strength to their cause from the beginning."

* While the clergy of Cork thus continued with such persistency to heap the grossest abuse on the Methodists, it was but natural that those thus basely misrepresented should become, in a great manner, alienated from the Establishment, and contemplate a complete separation. Accordingly, they wrote to Mr. Wesley, saying they would take care of themselves, and erect themselves into a Dissenting congregation. He felt this intensely, and, doubtless nothing but the powerful influence he wielded, exercised to the utmost extent, prevented them from carrying out what, under the circumstances, was a reasonable and natural desire.

6 21 Wesley, having spent two days in Dublin, where he found "all things there in a more prosperous state than ever before," on June 21st began a second visit to the provincial Societies. At Closeland he preached "to a little, earnest company." At Portarlinton he conducted the first recorded Watch-night service in this country, then generally held on the Friday night nearest the full moon. Here also, there being no English service, he went to the French church, attended by the numerous Huguenot families in the town, and writes: "I have sometimes thought Mr. Whitefield's action violent, but he is a mere post to Mr. Calliard." In Mountrath, *en route* from Mountmellick to Roscrea, some person met him on the bridge, and urged him to preach. So, as inclement weather prevented his taking a stand in the market-place, he utilized an empty house, which

was quickly filled, many standing at the door and windows, while he declared "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." At the service in Roscrea several clergymen and other gentlemen were present. At Birr the congregation was four times larger than usual, and included many Roman Catholics. At Frankford many gathered to hear, chiefly Romanists, and "they gave a calm, stupid attention." At Tullamore, it being the fair day, Wesley had many hearers, and found an increasing spirit of earnestness in the people. At Athlone he preached to a large number of officers and soldiers, who had come to the town to take part in a review. At a second service the stout-hearted trembled on every side, particularly the troopers late at Philipstown, who did once run well. One of them sank down to the ground, and such a spirit of solemn, deep humiliation seemed to pervade over the whole assembly, that when Mr. Wesley dismissed them none seemed willing to go. Then one soldier after another stood up, and declared what the Lord had done for his soul. "The words were as fire, and kindled a flame which spread through the congregation," who praised God with one heart and voice.

Having visited Aughrim and Castlegar, Wesley preached at Ahascragh, a great part of the audience being Romanists, some of whom were brought under deep conviction of sin. He unexpectedly had a large congregation waiting for him at Keenagh, to whom he preached; and on his return speaks of them as "a simple loving people." A gentleman who had resided at Moate, and whose son two years previously had been one of a mob that drummed Mr. Williams out of the town, accompanied the earnest evangelist from Keenagh to Longford and back again. He had been strongly prejudiced against Methodism, but through the reading of Mr. Wesley's sermon on "The Almost Christian," was convinced of sin, and meeting Wesley at Birr, followed him from place to place, until at length the Lord lifted upon him the light of His countenance.

At Mullingar Wesley was requested by the Sovereign or Governor of the town to preach; but he had little hope of doing good in a place where he could preach but once, and where no Methodist except himself would be suffered to preach at all. At Drumcree many respectable people came from

various parts of the country, who seemed quite unconcerned ; but at a succeeding meeting there were few dry eyes, and many cried aloud for mercy.

7.14 On July 14th Mr. Wesley got back to Dublin, where he spent the next eight days. On July 21st he wrote to Mr. Blackwell as follows :—" That any of the Methodist preachers are alive is a clear proof of an over-ruling Providence ; for we know not where we are safe. A week or two ago, in a time of perfect peace, twenty people assaulted one of our preachers near Limerick. He asked their captain what they intended to do. He calmly answered, 'To murder you,' and accordingly presented a pistol, which snapped twice or thrice. Mr. Fenwick then rode away. The others pursued, and fired after him, but could not overtake him. Three of his companions they left for dead. But some neighbouring justice of the peace did not take it well ; so they procured the cut-throats to be apprehended ; and it is supposed they will be in danger of transportation, though murder is a venial sin in Ireland."

The preacher here referred to was Michael Fenwick, to whom Mr. Wesley on leaving Dublin committed the superintendency of the work in Ireland for the following year, and whom he afterwards described as "an excellent groom, *valet de chambre*, nurse, and upon occasion a tolerable preacher."

* Upon the whole, Wesley was well satisfied with the work in Ireland. He writes : "I had the satisfaction of observing how greatly God had blessed my fellow-labourers, and how many sinners were saved from the error of their ways. Many of these had been Roman Catholics ; and I suppose the number of these would have been far greater had not the good Protestants, as well as the Popish priests, taken true pains to hinder them."

7.22 While the founder of Methodism was thus itinerating through the country, Hopper visited Portarlinton, Edenderry, Mountmellick, Tyrrell's Pass, Birr and Aughrim. He says he had great crosses but great comforts. On July 22nd he embarked with Wesley for England.

As these honoured evangelists left this country, God raised up Thomas Walsh to carry on the good work, and that with wonderful success. The life of this devoted Christian, says

Southey, "might indeed almost convince a Catholic that saints are to be found in other communions as well as in the Church of Rome." He saw in Methodism a genuine reproduction of the apostolic Church, and gave himself to study that he might the better promote its mission. Besides his native Irish language, he mastered the English, Latin, Greek and Hebrew: the latter was especially a sublime delight to him, as the medium by which God had originally spoken to man. "O truly laudable and worthy study," he exclaims, "whereby a man is enabled to converse with God, with holy angels, with patriarchs and prophets, and clearly to unfold to men the mind of God from the language of God!" He believed that he was Divinely helped in these sacred studies, and such was his success that if he was questioned concerning any Hebrew word in the Old, or any Greek one in the New Testament, he would tell, after a pause, how often it occurred in the Bible, and what it meant in every place. His studies were intermixed with ejaculations of praise and supplication. He would cry, "I fain would rest in Thee! I thirst for the Divine life. I pray for the Spirit of illumination. I cast myself upon Jesus Christ, the God of glory, and the Redeemer of the world. I desire to be conformable unto Him, His friend, servant, disciple and sacrifice!"

He contemplated with a sense of profound awe the responsibility of the Christian ministry. "Lord Jesus," he prayed in view of it, "I lay my soul at Thy feet, to be taught and governed by Thee. Take the veil from the mystery, and show me the truth as it is in Thyself; be Thou my sun and star by day and by night." Having consulted Mr. Wesley, whom he regarded with the greatest respect, and received a note advising him to make the trial, he walked thirty miles to his first appointment at Shronell, accompanied by one of his brothers and another Christian friend. Having communicated his errand, a considerable congregation assembled in the evening in a large barn, to whom he preached for the first time, and continued to do so morning and evening during the few days he remained there, God bearing testimony to the word of His grace. For although some mocked, others turned to the Lord. Walsh now resolved to defer no longer devoting himself wholly to the work

Walsh



to which he believed God had called him. Once in the ranks of the ministry no contemporary member of it became more eminent for zeal, labours or sufferings. Twice every day at Limerick he proclaimed his message with remarkable power, and with much earnestness besought multitudes to "seek the Lord while He may be found." And it pleased God to give His blessing. Several persons who had been utterly careless became anxiously concerned about their salvation, and others who had been deeply distressed under a sense of guilt and danger were enabled to rejoice in the God of their salvation. It was not unusual for persons to be so impressed under his fervent discourses as to resolve not to leave the place till they should find rest to their souls.

With Thomas Walsh was received into the itinerancy Thomas Kead, another fruit of the labours of the Methodist preachers in Ireland. While the Lord thus raised up labourers He also opened new and important fields of Christian work.

* Ulster was the last of the four provinces visited by the itinerants, and it was here eventually the most extensive good was effected. The first preacher to visit this district of country being James Kershaw, a young man of considerable ability, who seems to have been very successful, and to have formed classes in several parts of the county of Armagh, including Terryhoogan in the parish of Ballymore, and Bluestone in the parish of Seagoe.

In the autumn, Mr. Cownley, who had been in England some six months, returned to Ireland, where he visited several places and established societies. In Limerick on one occasion, when preaching in the street he was surrounded by a mob, the principal promoters being soldiers, one of whom assaulted him. The assailant being recognised, and complaint made to the commander, with a justice which frequently distinguishes officers of the British army, he desired Mr. Cownley to name the punishment, and it should be inflicted; but the itinerant said he only desired peace, which was soon restored by the timely exertions of those in authority. A different spirit, however, influenced one of the local clergy, who was determined that none of his parishioners should be Methodists. Many indeed were out of his reach, but the poor were threatened that their

weekly allowance should be stopped, unless they desisted from hearing these men. This intolerant ecclesiastic sent for a poor old woman, who attended the services, and with an air of authority inquired, "What do you believe? What is your faith?" With great simplicity she began to repeat the Apostle's Creed; but he stopped her with an oath and said, "That is my faith," and then, with a torrent of imprecations and expressions too wicked to be repeated, dismissed her. *

Chapter V.

1751

THOMAS WALSH having been employed for some time at Limerick, left this city to travel through other parts of the south of Ireland. His way had in some degree been prepared, many having received the Gospel which he preached from others; and he not only entered into their labours, but also opened many new fields of usefulness. Besides preaching twice and sometimes thrice each day, he often travelled many miles between. Having himself derived spiritual good from open-air preaching, he frequently preached abroad. For some time his efforts were accompanied with marvellous success. Multitudes of all denominations attended his ministrations, and before long he was known all round the country. In his discourses he avoided controversy, and did not attempt to expose even the errors of Popery, but endeavoured to present the truth in purity and power. "I contend," said he, "with no man about opinions, but preach against sin and wickedness in all. Suppose three persons of different denominations—it may be a Churchman, a Quaker, and a Papist—sitting down and drinking to excess begin to dispute, each affirming that his is the best religion, where is the religion of all these men? They are of their father, the devil, while his works they do, and if they live and die in this condition, hell must be their portion."

In the fervour of his soul he was wont to cry out with tears—

"Hear me, and if the doctrine I preach be not according to the Word of God, stone me on the spot, make a sacrifice of me, only hear for yourselves." His command of the Irish language gave him a great advantage. Such is its deep and touching pathos, that it was long ago said, "When you plead for your life, plead in Irish." Even the poor Romanists listened willingly when they were addressed in their mother tongue, and frequently shed silent tears or cried aloud for mercy. In country towns the peasantry, who were present on market days, and stopped to hear the preacher from mere curiosity, were oftentimes melted into tears, and declared that they could follow him all over the world. One who had laid aside some money, which he intended to bequeath for the good of his soul to some priest or friar, offered to bequeath it to him if he would accept it. In conversation, too, at inns, upon the highway and in the streets, this remarkable man omitted no opportunity of doing good. Even the beggars to whom he frequently addressed himself, would fall on their knees and beat their breasts, weeping and crying for mercy. On January 4th, 1751, he writes, "My soul was delighted to see with what earnestness the poor Irish received the Word, being in general deeply affected. O, how they did weep and cry for mercy! May God hear their prayers! Surely this people will rise up in judgment against the Protestants, who having the light of the Gospel, either neglect or despise it, and also against the pastors of this ignorant people, who hold them in error. O, what have the Romish clergy to answer for!" Again in April: "Many of them professed, after preaching, that they received more benefit from that one sermon than from all the masses they had attended." At another time "Two members of the Church of Rome were deeply convinced of their want of a Saviour, and thirty-four joined themselves together to seek and serve the Lord." When preaching in Irish, even hearers who did not understand his speech were smitten by the power of the Holy Ghost. An instance is related of at least one man who, hearing him in Dublin, was thus "cut to the heart."

The enemies of the truth, and especially the priests, soon became alarmed at his success, and all kinds of derogatory reports were spread abroad to deter the people from listening

to him. In Clonmel the priest assured his congregation that he had been a servant boy to a certain priest, and that having stolen his master's books, he had by that means learned to preach, and was now availing himself of his newly acquired art, for a better living. The people, nevertheless, ran after him and wept and cried aloud, under his word, as he proclaimed it on mountains and highways, in meadows, private houses, prisons and ships, and kneeling down, would begin to call upon the Virgin and Apostles, till he checked them and taught them better. They often followed him when the sermon was concluded, begging for further instruction. They would also come to his rooms to obtain his counsels and an interest in his prayers.

Misrepresentation having failed, recourse was made to violence. Mobs were collected, frequently he was waylaid in his journey, and assaulted with sticks and stones; but, by a remarkable interposition of Divine Providence, escaped with his life. On one occasion, while he was preaching in Athlone, a company of military officers were proceeding to the place, with an intention to make a disturbance, and on the bridge they overtook a man who was quietly driving a bull through the town. They requested the loan of the huge brute, that they might drive him into the market place and thus disperse the congregation. The man objected, saying the bull did not belong to him, and if injured he must be accountable to the owner. The gentleman engaged to be responsible for any damage that might accrue, and then exulting in having secured such a formidable ally, drove him forward. But the terrified animal instead of rushing among the peaceable people, who had no way to defend themselves, turned round on his pursuers, and dashing through them ran violently down a narrow lane to the river, was carried away and drowned. The consequence was, the officers had to pay the full value of the bull, while the congregation thankfully acknowledged the Divine mercy and protection, so signally extended to them.

On another occasion, at Castletown-Delvin, Westmeath, Mr. Walsh having attempted to preach in the street, was compelled to fly for his life; and while followed by a mob, pelting him with stones, was rescued out of their hands by the

timely interference of the vicar of the parish, the Rev. Moore Booker. The "pale, meagre countenance" of the youthful preacher, and the persecution to which he was exposed, at once excited the sympathy of the aged and benevolent clergyman ; while his "strong uncultivated understanding, the simplicity of his manners, and the integrity of his heart, together with his heroic enthusiasm and undaunted resolution in the cause of his conscience," inspired the highest admiration. "No man," says Mr. Booker, "had ever so suddenly gained my affections as Mr. Walsh ;" and henceforward the vicar's house became the preacher's home.

The Rev. Moore Booker, A.M., graduated in Dublin University in 1706, and doubtless soon after was ordained. At the period before us he was vicar of Delvin, which then included the parish of Drumcree, his church and residence being on the townland of Rosmead. Although his religious views were so thoroughly lax and unevangelical that Mr. Wesley said of his friendship, on their first meeting, "It cannot last—the same person cannot long admire both John Wesley and John Taylor ;" yet Mr. Booker sympathized strongly with the Methodists, on account of the manifest moral good they had done, their warm attachment to the Established Church, and their Arminianism, or as he puts it, their "keeping clear of the detestable doctrine of Predestination." Although the members of the Society in his parish—more especially Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Charles—for some time did not and could not appreciate his ministrations, and complained strongly of them, and notwithstanding Mr. Wesley's anticipations to the contrary, he stood firmly to Methodism to the end, and it is to be hoped saw the errors in his views.

Mr. Booker felt it to be his duty to write to the Rev. Dr. Henry Maule, Bishop of Meath, giving the result of his observations with regard to the Methodists, and asking his lordship's advice. In this letter, which is dated April 27th, 1751, he says, "Last Christmas day I had at the Sacrament above fifty whose faces I had scarce seen at the church before, and upon inquiry into their characters, found them mostly to have been persons of very profligate lives. About a fortnight ago one of them told me it was a great trouble to their Society that they had not more frequent opportunities of receiving the Communion.

I desired him to let his brethren know that I was always at their service; and at any time, upon proper notice, I should administer it occasionally, either at my church or Drumcree, at their request, which was done accordingly yesterday at Drumcree. I have always kept what is called the best company, but none that ever gave such solid pleasure before. Some had come that morning, as I was informed, very near ten miles on foot, though the weather was very severe and had prevented several. I had seventy communicants, true piety and charity sat smiling on their face; and I must say I never saw Divine service heard with so much reverence and attention. I was told there were but three in the congregation that did not profess themselves of that Society, and those not of the first rank of them. Are these, my lord, subjects to set a Popish mob upon, to be railed at by fools, and too often from the pulpit? There is scarce a lay gentleman round me, that has not taken them under his protection. They were speaking of building a convenient house for holding their Sunday evening assemblies; two gentlemen of fortune present told them they would subscribe five guineas each. A servant from them is thought a treasure, and greatly encouraged. Sunday patrons and football assemblies were quite frequent. The champions at those sports are now better employed, and the very Papists are ashamed of it. I should have told your lordship I had yesterday among my communicants six Papists; they have a seventh, but they have not yet made their recantation. I hope your lordship will have the pleasure of sending me your commands to receive them altogether very soon. These, I dare vouch for them, are no hypocrites. It was not a little affecting to see the poor creatures open their mouths for the bread to be put into them, as they had been used."

This valuable testimony to the success of Methodism instead of securing the Bishop's thanks and approbation, as Mr. Booker had expected, drew out a severe censure from his lordship and the Vicar-General. The vicar of Delvin might question the natural depravity of man, repudiate the personality of the devil, and even deny the divinity of Christ, as publicly and frequently as he pleased, with no one to gainsay or call him to account; but as soon as ever he showed any sympathy with

Methodism, the Bishop and his clergy rose up in arms against him. To this attack Mr. Booker replied at length in a second letter, completely vindicating his conduct ; but this did not satisfy those in authority, as at the succeeding visitation, the Bishop, in his charge to the clergy, cautioned them against the delusions under which one of their brethren—Mr. Booker—had fallen. The publicity thus given to the matter compelled the worthy vicar in self-defence, to publish both his letters, together with an explanatory introduction. In the latter he says—“ How those poor, simple, honest Christians have rendered themselves so formidable, is what I cannot account for. I must declare that my church, at least its Communion table, owes almost nine in ten of its company to their labours, and I can affirm the same of one or two neighbouring parishes. Were it not for them, we should meet as few of the meaner sort there as of gentlemen of rank and fortune ; and I take upon me to say, if we with equal skill and care water, dress, and prune the plants which these poor people have raised to our hands, God will give the increase.”

On May 24th the Rev. G. Whitefield arrived for the second time in Dublin, where he was gladly received and entertained by Mr. Lunell. He preached twice daily in the city to increasing congregations, and found that Providence had wonderfully prepared his way, and overruled everything for his greater acceptance. At first the greatness and hurry of the place surprised him ; but in a short time he saw unmistakeable evidence of the Spirit's work. There were many true converts, amongst whom were two or three students and several soldiers. The fields were white unto harvest, the congregations were large—upwards of ten thousand persons being present at one of his services—and the people listened as for eternity. Soon after he left the city he heard from Mr. Lunell that Dublin was “ in a ferment,” and that his hearers would be even more numerous on his return.

Having remained for ten or eleven days in the metropolis. Whitefield set out for the provinces, and continued to preach twice almost every day. “ Everywhere there seemed to be a stirring among the dry bones, and the trembling lamps of God's people were supplied with fresh oil.” Though numerous offences

had arisen, chiefly through the pernicious influence of Roger Ball, and in some places religion was "brought to a low ebb," the cry was raised, "Methodism is revived again." At Athlone the eloquent evangelist sounded the Gospel trumpet four times. At Limerick he preached seven times to large and affected audiences, and the Lord vouchsafed His special presence. At Cork he preached twice "to a great body of people, with all quietness." From thence he went to Bandon, Kinsale, and Waterford, "where a like blessing attended the word." On his return to Cork, he preached five or six times more, and on each occasion "both the power of the word and the number of hearers increased." On one occasion as Mr. Whitefield proclaimed the glad tidings of salvation, a young man named Andrew Laffan passing by, stopped and listened until the close of the service. Much impressed, he seized an opportunity of attending another meeting, the Word was applied to his conscience with power, and shortly after he obtained peace with God. The young convert began at once to work for Christ, spoke to the workmen, servants and children of the noble lady in whose employment he was, and his labours were not in vain. He was regarded with favour by her ladyship, and two at least of her sons were converted to God. Mr. Laffan some years subsequently became a faithful witness of the all-cleansing power of the Saviour's blood, and consequently a most devoted and successful Christian worker until his happy death, which took place in 1790. As Whitefield took his leave of Cork hundreds prayed that God would bless him, and many Romanists said if he would stay they would leave their priests. After a tour of more than three weeks, he returned to Dublin, where he "again published the everlasting Gospel." On the evening of July 3rd he arrived at Belfast, and intended to embark immediately for Scotland, but the people prevailed on him to stay. In about an hour's time thousands assembled to hear the Word. He preached here morning and evening on the following day; and subsequently at Lisburn, Lurgan, Lambeg, and the Maze. The prospect of doing good was so promising that he regretted not having gone sooner to the North. He spent a little more than six weeks in Ireland, altogether, during which he underwent enormous labour,

especially for a man in feeble health, and then set sail for Scotland.

Although at the Conference held in Bristol on March 11th, no objection was made to the doctrines of Methodism, and all "seemed of one mind as well as one heart;" and again, when about thirty preachers met in Leeds on May 15th, and particular inquiry was made "concerning their grace, and gifts and fruit," of one only was there reason to entertain a doubt; yet the leaven of error had evidently begun to work. Some of the itinerants entertained opinions that were far from satisfactory to the Wesleys, and the chief offenders, if not in Ireland, had at least to some extent imbibed their views in this country.

One of these heterodox notions arose from a strong antipathy to the Episcopal Church, now for the first time apparent, but subsequently manifested often, and destined to increase in extent and power until eventually it led to a complete separation. Mr. Wesley heard that Charles Skelton and Joseph Cownley "frequently and bitterly railed against the Church." This was probably a gross exaggeration; but it may safely be assumed that these preachers had lost sympathy with a church whose ministers had acted with such cruel and bitter injustice.

Others of the preachers, either from never having been given to study, or it may be having acquired the baneful idea that it was unnecessary, did not apply themselves, as they ought to have done, to improve their minds by diligent reading. This Wesley would not tolerate; he declared that "idleness had eaten out the heart of the half of their preachers, particularly those in Ireland," and he requested his brother to give them their choice—either to follow their trade, or resolve before God to spend the same hours in reading, which they used to spend in working. "If our preachers," he says, "do not, nor will not, spend all their time in study and saving souls, they must be employed close in other work, or perish."

But another, and more serious evil, was a tendency to Antinomianism. In Dublin, through the influence of Mr. Lunell, and probably other members of the Society, whose religious views were not Arminian, several of the preachers became more or less tainted. When James Wheatley was in the city, through his intercourse with the Moravians he

adopted very much their views and style of preaching. At first several of the itinerants in Ireland complained of this; but in a few months nearly all were unhappily brought to think and speak like himself.

The teaching of Roger Ball also no doubt spread these pernicious notions. In a letter to a friend, dated August 21st, Wesley writes, "I see plainly the spirit of Ham, if not of Corah, has fully possessed several of our preachers. So much the more freely and firmly do I acquiesce in the determination of my brother, 'that it is far better for us to have ten or six preachers, who are alive to God, sound in the faith, and of one heart with us and with one another, than fifty of whom we have no such assurance.' " *

Accordingly, the Wesleys resolved upon a thorough inquiry into the character and creed of all their preachers. This office fell upon Charles, who opened a Conference for inquiry at Leeds, on September 11th. It consisted of three clergymen and eleven preachers, including Messrs. Hopper, Reeves, Greenwood, Swindells, and Michael Fenwick; and was begun by singing a hymn, which Charles Wesley seems to have composed for the occasion, and a few stanzas of which are here subjoined:—

" Arise, Thou jealous God, arise,
Thy sifting power exert,
Look through us with thy flaming eyes,
And search out every heart.

Our inmost souls Thy Spirit knows,
And let Him now display
Whom Thou hast for Thy glory chose,
And purge the rest away.

Th' apostles false far off remove,
Thy faithful labourers own,
And give us, each himself to prove,
And know as he is known.

Do I presume to preach Thy word,
By Thee uncalled, unsent?
Am I the servant of the Lord,
Or Satan's instrument?

I once unfeignedly believed
Myself sent forth by Thee;
But have I kept the grace received,
In simple poverty."

* Tyerman's *Wesley* ii. p. 129

Twelve verses of this searching hymn were sung, and its author, the president, prayed. Having spent five hours in faithful and profitable conversation on the qualifications, work, and trials of a preacher, those present agreed to postpone opinions till the next general Conference, and separated in the spirit of love. Messrs. Williams and Trembath, however, were not present. In their subsequent history they afforded striking illustrations of the effects of erroneous principles in marring the character, and blighting all influence for good ; and within a year or two both ceased to be recognised as Methodist preachers. Soon after the above Conference, it was arranged by the Wesleys that greater care should henceforward be exercised in the admission of preachers, so that none should be received without proper examination, both as to grace and gifts.

Toward the close of the year, John Haime and Jacob Rowell were for the first time appointed to labour in Ireland. The former had been in the army, where, after his conversion, while in Flanders, he began to preach to his comrades with marvellous power and success. Congregations of a thousand at a service were wont to attend, and several hundred soldiers were converted. He was one of those remarkable men who, like Nelson, were raised by Methodism from humble life to eminent usefulness, and who characterized its early ministry by their own strongly marked traits. He went into the battle of Dettin-gen exclaiming, "In Thee have I trusted ; let me never be confounded !" "My heart," he adds, "was filled with love, peace and joy, more than tongue can express. I was in a new world. I could truly say, 'Unto you which believe, He is precious.' " Seven hours he stood amid the perils of the field, while his comrades fell around him, the one at his left hand being struck dead ; but Haime came out of the battle safe and triumphant. Jacob Rowell was a plain, upright, faithful man, very zealous for the salvation of souls, and, like his namesake, the patriarch, no stranger to wrestling with God.

Chapter VII.

1752.

ON January 4th, 1752,* Thomas Walsh set out for Roscrea, and when a mile from the town, was waylaid by about four score men, armed with sticks, and bound by oath in confederacy against him. They were so liberal a mob, that provided they could reclaim him from Methodism, they appeared not to care what they made of him ; and insisted upon bringing a Romish priest and a minister of the Irish Church to talk with him. Walsh, with great calmness, explained to them that he contended with no man concerning opinions, nor preached against particular churches, but against sin and wickedness in all. And he so far succeeded in mitigating their disposition, that they offered to let him go, provided he would swear never again to come to Roscrea. Walsh would rather have suffered martyrdom, and that was the alternative proposed. They then carried him into the town, where the whole rabble surrounded him, and it was determined that he should either swear or be put into a well. The courage with which he refused to bind himself by any oath or promise made him friends even among so strange an assembly. Some cried out vehemently that he should go into the well ; others took his part. In the midst of the uproar, the parish minister came up and, by his interference Walsh was taken to an inn ; but, it being market day, he bravely went out again, and taking his stand among the throng in the street, began to preach. Some of the crowd, however, having seized him by the back of the neck, hurled him before them out of the town. He at last got on his horse, and taking off his hat, prayed for some time in their midst, and then called upon them in the name of God, for Christ's sake, to repent. " I came off from them," he writes, " in peace of conscience and serenity of mind." Such labours were not in vain. Nothing daunted he

* Misprinted 1750 in the *Life of Walsh*.

returned to the town : and, with the Divine blessing, there were gathered a few who departed from evil, and met frequently to strengthen each other's hands in God, thus laying the foundation of the Wesleyan Society in Roscrea.

Some months later Walsh introduced Methodism into Clonakilty. On June 11th, as he was about to preach there in the open air, sergeants commissioned by a reverend magistrate having arrived to seize him, he opened his Bible at Job xxi. 3, "Suffer me that I may speak ; and after that I have spoken, mock on." Whereupon the officers, struck by the singularity of the text and afterwards impressed by the eloquence of the preacher, heard him attentively throughout. They then conducted him to the justice of the peace, who declared that he would commit him to prison if he did not promise to cease preaching in that neighbourhood. Walsh replied by asking if there were no swearers, drunkards, Sabbath-breakers, and the like in the town : and being told that there were, he refused to give the required pledge ; adding, that if after he should have preached there a few times there appeared no reformation among such offenders, he would then trouble them no more. Not satisfied with such a proposal, the magistrate committed him to prison. But it was too late ; a profound impression had already been made, and the whole town seemed moved on his behalf. Several accompanied him to the gaol, and others sent bedding and provisions, while he preached through the grated window to a crowd without, which extended as far as his voice could reach.

About this time the first Methodist chapel in Ireland was completed and opened. It was in Whitefriar Street, Dublin. The steps taken to prepare for the building are noticed in Mr. C. Wesley's journal as follows :—"Oct. 19, 1747. I dined at a gentleman's who has offered us a large piece of ground to build upon, at a moderate rent. It seems as if the time for building were at hand, the magistrates are so favourable." Again on November 26th, he says, "I have spent the day taking subscriptions for the building ; and at night proposed it to the Society, who were glad to give of their little. Upwards of seventy pounds were subscribed." March 14, 1748, Mr. J. Wesley writes to Mr. Blackwell—"We have not found a place yet that will

suit us for building. Several we have heard of, and seen some; but they are all leasehold land, and I am determined to have freehold, if it is to be had in Dublin; otherwise we must lie at the mercy of our landlord whenever the lease is to be renewed." In this, however, he appears to have been disappointed, having had to build on leasehold land, and at a heavy rent.

Wesley's description of this chapel is brief. He says—"The house here is nearly of the same size and form with that of Newcastle, but having deeper galleries on three sides, it will contain a larger number of people." As the city then stood the new erection was well situated, with a minister's house at each end; not quite in line with the chapel front. In after years there were erected in front a girls' school-house, a house used as a book-room, a gateway entrance, and an alms-house for widows, which shut in the chapel and ministers' houses from the street. The preaching house was said to accommodate a thousand persons when well filled; the galleries were deep and elevated, supported by massive pillars, and on these rested others that supported the ceiling. An upper story was divided into a suite of rooms, with movable partitions, and in the centre a long lobby from end to end. Here the classes and bands met, and subsequently were held the leaders' meetings, and the very interesting breakfast meetings of the Strangers' Friend Society. The erection of such an edifice was a formidable undertaking to a comparatively small and humble society; but most generous assistance was given by Mr. Lunell, who subscribed no less than four hundred pounds towards the object. This building was for almost a century the cathedral of Irish Methodism, where the ablest of her ministers proclaimed the glad tidings of salvation, and from which the light of Divine truth radiated to the most remote parts of our Island.

Very soon, however, after its erection a large mob assembled in front, smashed most of the windows, and had just broken open the doors when a company of soldiers arrived, and the chief rioters were apprehended. True bills were found against them: but, notwithstanding the clearest evidence, the jury, being nearly all Romanists, brought in a verdict of "Not

Guilty." The apprehension and trial of these miscreants however struck terror into the hearts of their companions, so that the Society subsequently enjoyed great quietness, and the members could even walk unmolested through the principal streets of the city.

On July 17th the Rev. J. Wesley, accompanied by his wife, arrived at Dublin. On Sunday evening the new chapel "was nearly filled, but great part of the hearers utterly unawakened." The Society still consisted of about four hundred and twenty members, "though many had been much shaken, chiefly by various opinions which some of the preachers had propagated." On the 27th Mr. Wesley left for the country, and having preached at five places on his way, arrived at Coolalough, where he met many of his friends from all parts. This was probably the beginning of the quarterly meetings, which were held here for many years, to which the Methodists resorted from far and near. An abundant provision was made by Mr. Handy for their entertainment, and they were generally seasons of great spiritual enjoyment.

At Drumcree Mr. Wesley met the Rev. Moore Booker, "the last man he would have expected." And yet he was standing firmly to the Society, notwithstanding continued opposition, even amongst his own parishioners, one of whom published a letter bringing various charges against him, and especially the Methodists, such as enthusiasm, Puritanism and Popery. This was answered by a Mr. Wm. Evans, a member of the Society, "not so much to vindicate Mr. Booker, whose reputation did not need it, but on behalf of a poor, little innocent flock of Christ," who were greatly spoken against. This reply closes with the statement that it would not have been published but for a recent barbarous assault on the Methodists, by an enraged and deluded rabble, rendering necessary all honest means for the preservation not only of their property, but also their lives. "Nothing but misrepresentation," it is said, "could have excited the most savage amongst you to treat us like wolves and bears. The very dogs had more respect for the human form in the time of early heathen persecutions."

At Street, in the county of Longford, Wesley preached "to a civil, unconcerned congregation." At Abbeyderg, near Kee-

nagh, many Romanists being present, he felt much concern for them, and exhorted them to rely wholly on the one Mediator between God and man. At Athlone he preached in a large open space near the house, to many of the rich as well as poor. On the Sunday morning there was "the usual congregation in the Market-house, and the usual blessing;" and in the evening, at the Connaught side of the river, "abundance of Romanists as well as Protestants" were present, "all of whom seemed convinced that they ought not any longer to halt between two opinions." At Aughrim the people were "much alive to God." And at Birr, he says he "scarcely ever saw so large, so genteel, and so serious a congregation there before."

Wesley arrived at Limerick on the evening of August 13th, and on the two following days held the first Irish Conference. There were present—Messrs. Larwood, Haughton, Cownley, Fisher, Walsh, Rowell, Kead, Swindells, and Whitford, who may be regarded as the entire staff of itinerants then in Ireland. From the Minutes of this Conference we learn that there had been a general decay of the Societies in Ireland; partly occasioned by the teaching of Antinomian and Calvinian doctrines; partly by the want of discipline; and partly by the misbehaviour of preachers. All present declared that they did not believe in the doctrine of absolute predestination; but three of them added, "We believe there are some persons who are absolutely elected; but we believe, likewise, that Christ died for all: that God willeth not the death of any man, and that thousands are saved who are not absolutely elected. We believe, further, that those who are thus elected cannot finally fall; but we believe that other believers may fall: and that those who were once justified may perish everlastingly."

It was resolved, however, that in future no man should be received as a fellow-labourer unless he thoroughly agreed to both Methodist doctrine and discipline; and that if any preacher violated this agreement, letters should be sent to all the Societies, disowning him.

It was also decided that if a man was not able to preach twice each day he should be only a local preacher; that of the two, it was better to give up the evening preaching in a place than the morning; that the congregations must constantly kneel

during prayer, stand both in singing and while the text was read, and be serious and silent while the service lasted, and when coming and going away. Persons not having band tickets were not to be present at the public meetings of the bands, for this would make the tickets cheap and discourage those who had them.

It was arranged that quarterly meetings should be held during the year at Cork, Limerick, Coolalough, and Lisburn, on the first Tuesdays after Michaelmas, Christmas, Lady day, and Midsummer.

As previous to this nearly all the preachers had been single men without any settled allowance ; but as now at least one third were married, it was for the first time settled that there should be a stated provision for each. Preachers were to be allowed at least £8, and, if possible, £10 a year for clothing, and £10 a year was to be allowed for the support of each preacher's wife, with something additional for children.

The itinerants were enjoined to preach frequently and strongly on fasting, and to practise it every Friday, health permitting. Next to luxury, they were to avoid idleness, and were to spend one hour every day in private prayer.

Six brethren—James Morris, John Ellis, James Wild, Geo. Levick, Samuel Hobart, and Philip Guier—were received as preachers. Of these only one—James Morris—received an appointment, and was present during the concluding portion of the Conference, the others being then doubtless regarded simply as local preachers ; but Wild and Levick, who were soldiers, and Ellis subsequently became itinerants. Morris, who is said to have been a Palatine, had been at work in the county of Wexford, where his labours had been greatly owned of God. "All the country was moved by his preaching. Thousands flocked to hear, but one false step of his," subsequently taken, "quite scattered them again." Ellis proved a steady, faithful, and useful preacher ; but Wild and Levick did not continue long in the itinerancy.

Ireland was divided into six rounds or circuits, called Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Athlone, Wexford, and the North. Of the ten preachers present it was arranged that Messrs. Haughton, Whitford and Larwood should return to England,

and their place be supplied by Messrs. Edwards, Greenwood, and John Fenwick; and that each preacher should remain for about three months in succession on his appointed round.

During the week following this Conference, Wesley took an opportunity of speaking individually to the members of the Society in Limerick, many of whom he found "were rooted and grounded in love, and zealous of good works." He then proceeded to Cork, where although the house could not nearly contain the audience, he judged "a small congregation with peace, preferable to a large one with noise and tumult." On examining the Society, and putting away those who did not walk according to the Gospel, he found about three hundred who were striving to have a conscience void of offence toward God and man. On returning to the city a month later he proposed to the Society the building of a preaching house, the second erected in Ireland. In three or four days, two hundred pounds were subscribed, and a piece of ground was taken on Hammond's Marsh. With the assistance of a noble subscription of between three and four hundred pounds from Mr. Thomas Jones, this edifice was soon completed, and stood on the site now occupied by the chapel in Henry street.

At Kinsale Wesley preached in a large deep hollow, capable of containing two or three thousand people, the soldiers of the fort having, with their swords, thus literally "turned into ploughshares," cut a place for him to stand upon. At Clonmel it appeared that a wide door had been opened twelve months previously; but one evening, just after the sermon, the room in which the service was held fell, and two or three persons were hurt thereby: for which reason the people of the town resolved no Methodist should ever preach again in Clonmel. At Waterford only one poor man behaved amiss. His case was to be pitied. Some time before he had strong desires to serve God, and had broken off outward sins, when one of the prebendaries told him he did very wrong to go after these fellows, and made him promise to hear them no more. He kept his word, and turned back as a dog to his vomit, wallowing in sin as he had done before. But as he did not go to the Methodists, it was all right, he might go to the devil and welcome. Mr. Walsh also preached in the Market-house, but

in Irish ; and, it being market day, the people flocked from all sides to hear, and many of them listened seriously. A few of the rabble cursed and swore ; but did not make much interruption. In the evening Mr. Wesley went to the Court-house, and began to preach, but the mob was so large and noisy, that few could hear. Finding the tumult increased, he ceased and walked through the midst of them to his lodgings. They shouted and cursed amain : hitherto could they come but no further. Walsh frequently preached in this city, at this period, both in English and Irish, and with signal success.

At Boira, in the parish of Kiltrisk, Wexford, Wesley found a great and effectual door had been opened. At Bandon, though his visit was unexpected, the house was too small to contain one half of the congregation, so he preached in the street not only in the evening, but also on the following morning, enthusiastically availing himself of the light of the moon to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation to as many as possible. At Passage West he preached in the street to most of the inhabitants of the town, although but few seemed either convinced or affected.

During this tour Wesley wrote a pamphlet entitled, " A Short Method of Converting all the Roman Catholics in the Kingdom of Ireland, humbly proposed to the Bishops and Clergy of this Kingdom." Assuming that a large proportion of the inhabitants of the country are Romanists, and that Protestants cannot but earnestly desire that these should be convinced of their errors ; he enquires, why this desirable end is not urged with a vigour proportionate to its importance, and replies, because it is considered unattainable. While frankly admitting the difficulties he affirms, " There is one way, and one only ; one that will infallibly succeed. If this way is taken, I am willing to stake my life upon the success of it. And it is a plain, simple way, such as may be taken by any man, though but of a small capacity. For it requires no peculiar depth of understanding, no extraordinary height of learning ; but only a share of common sense, and an honest upright heart. Here therefore is the short and sure method. Let all the clergy of the Church of Ireland only *live* like the apostles, and *preach* like the apostles, and the thing is done."

On October 12th, having spent nearly eleven weeks in Ireland, during which there were not two consecutive dry days, Wesley set sail at Cove* for England.

It appears that the arrangement made at the Conference, so far at least as one of the preachers from England, probably Mr. Greenwood, was concerned, were not carried out, and that Mr. Hopper was sent to Ireland in his place. He remained a few weeks in Dublin, and then rode to Cork, where he spent the winter "with joy and sorrow." "They had warm work," he says, "in that city for a long time; but the Word of the Lord prevailed, and silenced the enemy."

Amongst the places into which Methodism obtained access during this year, was Carrickfergus. Here a class was formed through the Divine blessing on the labours of some pious soldiers in the 42nd Highlanders, then quartered in the town, and they were joined by Samuel Hay and John Sloane, as well as a few others of the inhabitants.

At this period the first division occurred in the Methodist Society in Ireland. It was, however, confined to Dublin, and did not involve any serious numerical loss. As already has been intimated, there were a number of influential persons in the metropolis, including Mr. Lunell and his brother-in-law, Mr. Jennings, whose opinions were Calvinistic, if not Antinomian, and they had for some time desired a ministry more in harmony with their views than that afforded by Methodism, especially as its Arminianism had become more pronounced. Mr. Lunell, in his correspondence with Mr. Whitefield, evidently kept pressing him to gratify their wishes; but that eloquent and truly Catholic evangelist was resolved not to be the founder of a sect, and stated this plainly and repeatedly to his correspondent. At length the opening of the new chapel, in Whitefriar street, having led the Society to give up the house in Skinner's alley, it was at once secured by the dissentients, and Mr. Thomas Adams, a lay preacher who was working with Mr. Whitefield, having visited the city, the opportunity was seized of forming a distinct society. Mr. Whitefield wrote expressing his disapproval of this step, and stating plainly that he could not promise them any settled help. A supply,

* Now called Queenstown.

however, was obtained from the Moravians, and thus the cause of the United Brethren—never very strong—was established in Dublin.

Methodism meanwhile had gradually spread through the settlements of the Palatines, and among many others led to the Saviour, there were two that claim special attention.

In this singular community was born, in 1734, Barbara Ruckle, at a place called, after her family, Ruckle Hill, in Ballingarrane. When eighteen years of age she became a member of the Methodist Society, and experienced the converting power of Divine grace, little supposing, in the humble obscurity of herself and people, that her fidelity was to be rewarded by pre-eminent usefulness and distinction in the religious history of the distant New World. From the beginning of her Christian life her piety was of the most profound character. The enjoyment of the witness of the Spirit has ever been the inward personal test of piety amongst the Methodists: it was the daily criterion of the spiritual life of this devoted woman: and when, in extreme age, she was about to close her life-pilgrimage, in the remote wilds of Canada, after having assisted in the foundation of her Church in that province as well as in the States, she could declare to the growing circles of Methodists around her, that from the day of her conversion she had never lost the evidence of her acceptance with God for twenty-four hours together.

With the name of Barbara Ruckle, afterwards Mrs. Heck, is generally associated that of Philip Embury. He was born at Ballingarrane in 1728, and when a boy attended the German school of Philip Guier, by whom he was taught to read and write. Subsequently he was sent to an English school, probably at Rathkeale; and after leaving it, was bound apprentice to a carpenter on his native townland. He heard Mr. Wesley preach during his visit to Limerick this year, and then received those religious impressions which resulted in his conversion. His own account is—"On Christmas day, being Monday, ye 25th of December, in the year 1752, the Lord shone into my soul, by a glimpse of His redeeming love, being an earnest of my redemption in Christ Jesus, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." He was shortly after appointed a leader, and proved eminently useful.

Chapter VII.

1753-55.

ONE of the preachers appointed at the last Conference to labour in Ireland was John Edwards, a man of superior ministerial abilities, who was greatly respected, albeit his religious views were Calvinistic. He had been converted during Mr. Whitefield's first visit to Ireland, had become one of his lay preachers, and in 1747 entered the Wesleyan itinerancy. In Dublin his ministry proved highly acceptable; but exercised at a time of great persecution, so that his life was frequently in imminent danger. On one occasion, when returning from a village where he had been preaching, the Ormond boys seized him, and threatened to throw him into the Liffey; but the Liberty boys rushed to his assistance, rescued him, and carried him home in triumph. Thus did a gracious Providence employ the mutual hostility of these two factions to save the life of His servant, who, under other circumstances, would in all probability have received but little mercy from his assailants.

At another time, in the provinces, Mr. Edwards having preached out of doors, a furious mob beset the house into which he had entered, threatening to burn it to the ground if he were permitted to remain in it. There was but one way of escape, and that was through a window, which opened into a garden belonging to a justice of the peace, who was himself a bitter opponent of the Methodists. Through this the preacher was let down, like the Apostle Paul, in a basket. Having reached *terra firma*, he stood some time, fearing that if observed the family would charge him with having broken into their garden, and thus, the cause of religion might be injured. At length he knocked at the door, asked for the magistrate; and being introduced, informed him of his position, which so favourably impressed the gentleman's mind that he hospitably entertained him for two days.

Some time afterwards, a number of soldiers, who under Mr.

Edwards' ministry had been brought to the knowledge of salvation, were removed to another town not favoured with a gospel ministry. They requested him to come and preach there, which he gladly consented to do. When he came within a mile or two of the town, he was met by some of the soldiers, who informed him that such were the cruel threatenings of the people against his life, that they were apprehensive of his safety. Mr. Edwards, however, was not to be dissuaded from his purpose ; and on his arrival, immediately preached in the street, and several persons of position, among whom was the Mayor of the town, came to hear, and by their presence prevented any disturbance. After the service, the Mayor invited the preacher to breakfast with several of the principal inhabitants, and told him they were glad he was come ; that the people were exceedingly dissolute, and the clergy, both Protestant and Catholic, very remiss in their duty ; and they hoped the Methodists would succeed in their endeavours to reform the town. These gentlemen subscribed to the support of stated preaching in a room, fitted up for the purpose ; and the Word of God was crowned with such a blessing that a society was soon formed, to the great joy of the soldiers.

At Limerick the Lord greatly owned the labours of Mr. Edwards. His congregations were large and several sinners were awakened, amongst whom was Miss Parker, a young lady of family and fortune, who lived many years a steady, pious member of the Society, and died rejoicing in the Lord.

On May 10th, Messrs. Hopper, Walsh, Edwards, and Rowell embarked for England. Concerning the voyage, Mr. Walsh writes as follows :—" There were on board several gentry and officers, with a large number of cabin passengers. They cursed, swore, and blasphemed as though they were in hell. I reprov'd them again and again ; but they still persisted, and said I was mad. O God ! if there never was any other damnation in the world to come than even the company of such wretches, who would not flee from it ?"

At the Conference held on May 24th, the following preachers were appointed to labour in Ireland—Messrs. Cownley, Skelton, Walsh, Larwood, Deaves—a zealous young man then received into the itinerancy—Kead, Swindells, Morris, and Gilbert.

This year was published the first edition of what is called "The Large Minutes," being a resumé of the conversations at the Conferences held in England, from 1744 to 1749, with corrections down to 1753, and forming, for the time being, the standard of Methodist discipline. Express injunctions are given with regard to the formation of societies, the places where public services should be held, field preaching, new places, the admission of strangers into meetings of the Society, the treatment of backsliders, the duties of leaders, the examination of members, the prevention of improper persons entering the Society, the admission of new members, and the meeting of children. Many of the Methodists having lately married unbelievers, it is resolved that those who do so shall be expelled from the Society; and that it shall be a general rule that no Methodist should marry without consulting the most serious of his brethren. It being ascertained that Sabbath breaking, dram drinking, evil speaking, unprofitable conversation, lightness, gaiety, and expensiveness of apparel, and contracting debts without sufficient care to discharge them, prevailed in several places, it is determined that none guilty of such conduct should be recognized as members.

The office and work of the Christian ministry are explained and enforced, and the twelve rules of a Helper enjoined. Advice is given to the preachers, as to the employment of time, and not rendering their conversation more profitable. Wesley's duty to inquire daily into the religious experience, behaviour, and study of his helpers is clearly stated; as well as the means to be employed to promote a closer union of the helpers with each other. It is agreed that they had not preached concerning personal and practical holiness so strongly and closely as they ought. Detailed instructions are given as to the best method of preaching, the sermons found to be attended with the greatest blessing; and the means of guarding against formality in public worship. Gifts, grace, and fruit are required in all candidates for the ministry, who after careful examination are to be received on trial for twelve months, and afterwards admitted into full connexion. The business of an assistant or superintendent is stated, part of which is to travel once a year through the Societies on his circuit with Mr. Wesley. The

whole of Ireland is regarded as one circuit. Preachers who have married are provided for out of the common stock, except those who have done so "hand-over-head," and are therefore to provide for themselves.

At this period a valuable addition to the Society in Ulster took place in Mr. Thomas Ryan, a retired attorney, then living on his estate at Clonmain, in the parish of Loughgall, county of Armagh, and afterwards one of Mr. Wesley's itinerants. When on a visit to England he was converted during a service conducted by a Methodist preacher, and on his return home began at once to labour for the salvation of souls. Such were the manifest tokens of the Divine blessing on his efforts that many were led to the Saviour. He was a man possessed of considerable gifts, combined with a larger amount of culture than fell to the lot of most of the itinerants at that time. His success led to a request for a preacher ; and the formation of a Society followed.

During this year the Methodist preachers first found their way to Drummersnave,* in the county of Leitrim, where they faithfully preached "Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." They were scoffed at by some, while by others the Gospel as preached proved the power of God unto their salvation. Amongst the first fruits of their labours was Lawrence Coughlan, who had previously been a devoted and zealous member of the Church of Rome. No sooner, however, did he find the Truth than an intense desire was awakened that others should be brought into possession of the blessing, which had made his own soul so happy. Soon after, meeting with Leonard Strawbridge, then a young man of sixteen, he told him that the Lord had brought him out of gross darkness, and for Christ's sake had forgiven his sins. The relation of this religious experience made a deep impression on the mind of young Strawbridge, and aroused him to a sense of his sinfulness, until at length he also was enabled to receive and rest on the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour. In this way it is probable that his brother Robert was led to give his heart to God, and enter upon a course of usefulness, which culminated

* Now called Drumana.

in his glorious work in America, as the Apostle of Methodism in Maryland.

About this time the Society in Bandon was encouraged by a valuable and unexpected acquisition. A gentleman of fortune, named Biggs, who had been a Presbyterian, and also a virulent opposer of Methodism, became, by the Divine blessing a zealous convert, and with his wife joined the congregation. These new converts evinced their zeal by rising at four in the morning, and, though advanced in years, going round among the neighbours in the depth of winter, in order to arouse them in time to attend morning service, which was regularly held at five o'clock both in winter and summer.

The Society in this town also sustained a serious loss by the death of Mr. Wm. Murray, their oldest member and most efficient leader. On Easter Tuesday, 1754, "in full confidence of a glorious resurrection, he slept in Jesus." His last words were, "The souls of believers are at their death made holy, and do immediately pass into glory; but their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection." After a pause he resumed: "At the resurrection they shall be openly acknowledged, and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of God through eternity, blessed—perfectly—bless—," and he breathed no more. The day after the death of this good man, Mr. Biggs conducted a religious service in the house, and read a sermon of Mr. Erskine's. At the funeral "the throng was prodigious." Every one carried a sprig of bays, which when the body was laid in the grave, was thrown over the coffin. Truly this was a faithful man, who feared God above many; and to whom Methodism in Bandon was much indebted.

The Conference of this year was held in London on May 22nd. Wesley says respecting it, "The spirit of peace and love was in the midst of us. Before we parted we all willingly signed an agreement, not to act independently of each other. So that the breach lately made has only united us more closely together than ever." The breach here referred to was the withdrawal from Methodism of five eminent preachers, who had become dissatisfied with the itinerancy, and with their

position as mere evangelists. J. Reeves, having obtained episcopal ordination, became minister of Magdalen Hospital, and afterwards curate of Whitechapel church. S. Larwood settled as an Independent minister at Southwark, J. Edwards at Leeds, C. Skelton at Bury, and J. Whitford at Bolton. Wesley hoped that the evil had ended, but it was spread more widely than he imagined, as will be seen hereafter.

Thomas Walsh seized the opportunity afforded him, while in London, of preaching to his fellow-countrymen in their own language. On Sunday, June 24th, at a place called Short's Gardens, "Abundance flocked to hear, and some were cut to the heart;" and on the following Sabbath at Moorfields "The congregation was exceedingly large, and all behaved seriously, though probably many of them came purely to hear what manner of language it was. For the sake of these he preached afterwards in English, if by any means he might win some. And wherever he preached, whether in English or in Irish, the word was sharper than a two-edged sword." Mr Wesley adds, that he did not know any preacher who in so few years was the instrument of converting so many sinners from the error of their ways.

When Mr. Walsh returned to Cork a large number of Romanists attended the services frequently held in the open air, as well as within doors. Amongst those who were thus happily stirred up to a concern for their salvation was an elderly woman, who had been in some religious order amongst them. She renounced Popery, regularly attended the Methodist meetings, and thenceforward received the Lord's supper in the Church of England. The priests became greatly irritated, and made strenuous efforts to stop the growing evil: for which purpose one of them affirmed, "As to that Walsh, who had some time before turned heretic, and went about preaching, he had been dead long ago; and he who then preached in this manner was but the devil in his shape." But their endeavours in a great measure proved ineffectual; for, though a few may have received false impressions from such malicious statements, yet many heard him gladly, and would not be hindered. Albeit, the more the priests urged, they prevailed the less. His labours, prayers, and tears for poor straying souls, over whom he often

yearned, were divinely acknowledged, not only in their reformation from Popery, but also in their conversion to God.

On a journey between Cork and Bandon, Walsh entered into conversation with a man, who rode some miles with him, until as the evangelist was wont, he endeavoured to bring the truth home to his heart and conscience, which so roused the Romanist that he declared, if he were shot for it he would have satisfaction, adding with an oath, "You shall never deceive another, for I am resolved to be the death of you just now." In the midst of his rage, Walsh reproved him in Irish; he was amazed, and replied, "Why did you not speak so to me at the beginning?" The lion became a lamb: and the servant of God having let him know in his own language what Christ had done for sinners, he departed with "a broken heart and a contrite spirit."

About this time an effort was made to introduce Methodism into Cloughjordan, which has since become a stronghold of the Society; but the itinerant was received with such a shower of dirt and stones as gave him little opportunity of preaching. One of those present was a young man named John Wilson, who soon after removed to the neighbourhood of Limerick, where, under the ministry of Thomas Walsh, he was led to decide for God; and until his happy death, fifty-four years after, continued an active, consistent member of the Society, efficiently sustaining various offices, and highly respected by all who knew him.

At this period the question of the Methodists separating from the Established Church assumed an importance it had not possessed previously. For years there had been dissatisfaction, the people in many instances having been repelled from the sacramental table in the Church, and driven to the alternative of either receiving the Lord's supper in Dissenting chapels or of neglecting the ordinance entirely. Ministers of experience, intelligence and piety, like Thomas Walsh, urged the claims of the Societies to have the sacraments administered to them in their own places of worship. This Mr. Wesley saw to be desirable in many respects, but that it was a real separation from the Church of England, which both he and his brother wished to avoid, and which Charles especially was determined if pos-

sible to prevent. Much correspondence, urging the claims of the Societies, preceded the Conference of 1755. It puzzled John Wesley and irritated Charles. In Ireland this desire seemed even stronger than in England: for Charles Wesley wrote to his brother, asking—"When the preachers in Ireland set up for themselves, must you not disown them?" John Wesley replied, "When," and advised his brother to go to Ireland, and save the country from this peril, if he thought he would succeed.

The Conference began at Leeds on May 6th, and the first question was, "Whether we ought to separate from the Church?" on which all the preachers present, being not less than sixty-three, were desired to speak their minds at large. Whatever was advanced on one side or the other was seriously and calmly considered; and on the third day all were fully agreed in the general conclusion, that whether it was lawful or not, it was inexpedient.

The following preachers were appointed to labour in Ireland:—Thomas Walsh (who was general superintendent), Jas. Deaves, Thomas Seccomb, R. Swindells, J. Cownley, T. Kead J. Oddie, J. Fisher, and J. Tucker.

Soon after the Conference, James Morgan, a native of Clonakilty, was called out into the itinerancy. He was then nineteen years of age. About five years previously he became deeply concerned about his soul, and sought the Lord, praying earnestly for that peace which the world cannot give. Knowing no one at the time who could sympathize with his feelings or afford him the needed instruction, his naturally cheerful and sprightly disposition became thoughtful, silent and absent. He shunned society, and wandered through shades, or shut up in retirement, brooded over his sorrow, read his Bible, and poured out his soul in prayer. Deaf to the counsels, threats and entreaties of friends, they feared that his melancholy would end in the loss of reason or of life. He continued in this sad state for about two years, when the town was visited by Thomas Walsh. He then met with some members of the Society, who deeply sympathized with him in his spiritual distress, and pointed out the way of salvation, and his privilege to enjoy redemption in the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of

sins. This he sought with all his heart ; and having found a few other persons, who also felt their need of this blessing, they met daily, united in prayer and the study of the Word of God, and encouraged each other to follow on to know the Lord. God visited the seeking sinner as, in the retirement of his room at midnight, he pleaded for pardon. In a transport of joyous astonishment, he exclaimed, " Lord, what is this? Who am I? What hast Thou done for me?" And with a heart swelling with gratitude, his first desire was to proclaim to others what the Lord had done for his soul. He thought, he says, " that he could have gone to the end of the earth, to make mention of the loving-kindness of God, his Saviour." Opportunities were soon afforded for Christian usefulness. Possessing a vigorous mind, improved by extensive reading and thought, and a pleasing address, he became at once very popular as a preacher. But his delicate nervous constitution, together with a deep sense of the requirements of his position, was ill-fitted for the hardships which preachers had then to endure, and he soon shrunk back from the work. However, at the instance of Mr. Wesley and others, whom he highly esteemed and loved, he resumed his public labours.

A very blessed work was carried on in the army through the instrumentality of Methodism. The removal of the different regiments from one place to another had both its advantages and disadvantages with regard to the advancement of religion. Often the soldiers proved pioneers of Methodism in the places to which they were removed, either preaching themselves, or requesting the itinerants to do so. Thus in the summer of this year, there was a large military encampment of eight regiments of foot, and two of horse at Cashel. Here William Coventry, a local preacher, who was a corporal in the Royal Scotch, frequently proclaimed the glorious Gospel, and thus Methodism was introduced into this Roman Catholic neighbourhood.

In the autumn Walsh was on the Limerick round, where his exposure to the weather brought on a serious attack of illness, which laid him aside for some time. In writing to Mr. Wesley on September 23rd, he says, " I find, as it were, an infinite desire to preach the Gospel, and, if I could, to set the

nation on fire. But the Providence of God keeps me weak, and often visits me with afflictions of body. I do not murmur, neither do I count my ~~life~~ dear unto myself; but I find need of patience, because I have not more health and strength to preach the Gospel, which I love more than my necessary food."

Evidently this intense desire led the devoted servant of God to be too precipitate in resuming his work. Two weeks later he writes again, "I had a relapse, but it continued only two days, yet I am quite weak and spent, although I endeavour to preach once a day, sometimes twice." Then with regard to the work through the country, he adds, "Brother Oddie is ill of a fever in Dublin. Brother Morgan, after labouring usefully for some time in Waterford, is running away from the work, from a consciousness of his inability; yet it seems he has more extensive gifts than some who have preached for years. The Athlone circuit has only Brother Swindells on it; for Brother Fisher is gone to Dublin, and I understand he is ill, too. Brother Seccomb, for whom I wrote to meet me here, is gone to Castlebar. The North and Cork are pretty well supplied; the former having Brothers Deaves and Kead, and the latter Brothers Cownley and Haughton." Mr. Haughton had evidently come to Ireland, instead of Mr. Joseph Tucker, who was appointed by the Conference. Of Limerick Mr. Walsh says, "Our congregations here are very large. This day I have appointed an hour to meet with some of the army. There is a prospect of doing good among them. They are Scots, and it is hard to get them to submit to our discipline."

Three weeks later this suffering servant of God was seized with a fever, which again disabled him from work, and on his recovery he wrote a full account of his mental and spiritual exercises during his sickness. On the day on which he wrote these reflections, and the first of his going out after this illness, it being a day appointed for fasting and prayer, to avert the judgment of God, which seemed impending over these nations, he was taken in a chair to the preaching-house, and preached for a full hour, having, as he expressed it, "a deep sense of the majesty of God, and joyful confidence that He would defend the real Israelites from the impending evil."

The number of preachers in Ireland at this period laid aside from active work by hard toil and severe privations, led to the calling out of others into the itinerancy. One of these was Lawrence Coughlan, of Drummersnave, who proved to be a pious, faithful and zealous man, whose labours were much owned of the Lord.

Chapter VIII.

1756.

ALTHOUGH Mr. Wesley in May, 1753, wrote that either he or his brother should visit Ireland every year, nearly four years had elapsed since he had done so. This probably arose from his protracted illness at the close of that year and the beginning of 1754; and also from the distracted state of the country brought on by political agitation. Many of the nobility and persons of consideration joined the disaffected, and popular discontent broke out in many places in clamour and riots so serious that the English ministry resolved to recall the Duke of Dorset, the then Lord Lieutenant. The extent of the disturbances, however, was evidently greatly exaggerated on the other side of the Channel. War also broke out with the French in the North American colonies, and an alarming rumour prevailed that Ireland was about to be invaded.

On March 29th Wesley embarked at Holyhead, and the following day, on arriving at Dublin, was surprised to find "all Ireland in perfect safety. None had any more apprehension of an invasion than being swallowed up in the sea: everyone being assured that the French dare not attempt any such thing." He spent nearly a month in the metropolis, during which he met about one hundred children, whom the preachers had catechized publicly twice a week; he conducted the first covenant service in Ireland, in which nearly four hundred of the Society united; and held the second Conference of the Irish preachers. He writes: "I never before found such unanimity among them. They appear to be not only of one heart, but likewise of one mind and judgment."

At this Conference Mark Davis was received into the itinerancy. He was a young man of twenty-two, a native of Dublin, born of respectable parents, who had given him a liberal education. He had taken an active and prominent part in connection with meetings in the city upon the plan of Dr. Woodward; but at the beginning of this year, through the influence of Mr. Deaves, became a member of the Methodist Society. There being a great lack of labourers, just then, at the request of Mr. Wesley he consented to enter the itinerancy, although he had preached only once before in a Methodist chapel, and was unacquainted with the doctrines and discipline of Society. His whole desire, however, was to do good, and although his views were not strictly Wesleyan, he proved a most valuable and successful preacher.

Soon after leaving the metropolis Mr. Wesley received a letter from Mr. Francis Fetherston, a student at Trinity College, Dublin, who had been led to decision for God. When, like his blessed Master, he was said to be beside himself, he replied, that if mad he "felt a joy which none but madmen knew." So his relatives formed a plan of placing him under restraint in Swift's Hospital for the Insane. He says also that he found two other students who had received the sincere milk of the Word, and one whom the Lord had stirred up to seek it.

Wesley set out for Cork on April 26th, accompanied by Walsh, purposing to see as many Societies as he could on the way. He preached at Edenderry, where the little Society had built a commodious preaching-house. At Tullamore he conducted a service in the Market-place, and gave an hour to some military officers in the barracks. At Athlone he spent one or two hours in close conversation with a lady and her husband from Barbadoes, who were about to return thither; and in the evening most of the local gentry attended the service. At Portarlington "many of the best in the town (so-called) were present," and seemed not a little amazed as the servant of God urged the necessity of being born again. At Kilkenny, where a few of the army and townspeople met in class, he preached in one of the officers' rooms, and says, "Still in Ireland the first call is to the soldiery." At Waterford he spent the greater part of a day in striving to remove misunderstandings

and offences that had arisen. The Society was rent asunder and reduced to twenty-six members, but he succeeded in bringing back thirty-one who had withdrawn. Leaving Mr. Walsh to follow up a good work that had begun in the city, Wesley proceeded to Clonmel, which he pronounced the pleasantest town beyond all comparison he had seen in Ireland. Here he preached in a large loft, capable of containing five or six hundred people ; but it was not full, many being afraid of it falling, as another had done some years previously. At a second meeting in the open air, the Mayor of the town and a number of officers and soldiers were present, and gave great attention ; but during the service a drunken man came marching down the street, armed with a club and cleaver, followed by a Popish mob, and swearing he would cut off the preacher's head. The soldiers wished to punish the man, and Wesley had difficulty in hindering them ; but the villain began to strike, and wounded a constable in the wrist, whereupon he himself was knocked down, and the Mayor and police marched him to gaol.

Wesley arrived at Cork on May 12th, and preached in the new chapel, which he describes as being very nearly as large as that in the metropolis, and far better finished in every respect, though at four hundred pounds less expense. It was on the same general plan as Whitefriar street chapel, with rooms overhead for the preachers to reside in, and for the meeting of classes, and continued in use for seventy years, when it was pulled down and rebuilt.

During his visit to Cork, Wesley met John Trembath, who had married a member of a highly respectable family in the city, a young lady remarkable for her accomplishments. Naturally vain, the applause of the people had spoiled him. He became indolent and boastful, and not always reliable. After having retired from the itinerancy, he turned to farming, and grew more and more dead to God, and alive to the world ; but now the Divine blessing on the words of Mr. Wesley, together with trials through which he had passed, were sanctified in quickening him again into some measure of spiritual life, and leading him to resolve to return to the itinerancy. This intention, however, he does not appear to

have carried out, further than engaging in work as a local preacher for a few years in Cork.

At Kinsale Wesley preached in the market place and also in the Exchange. At the latter service, he says, a great many soldiers and the Colonel were present, so that he conceived some hope that the seed sown, even in Kinsale, would not all be lost. At Inishannon he preached in the Market-house "to a very large and well-behaved congregation." Tradition says that the first that brought Methodism to this village was a man named Gaton Priest, who came over from Bristol, and settled here as a painter. No doubt some of the itinerants often preached here before it was visited by Wesley, as it lies on the road between Cork and Bandon.

Having spent three weeks in Cork and its vicinity, Wesley set out for Limerick, where he met Thomas Walsh. Amongst the soldiers then in this city was a Scotchman, named Duncan Wright, who was in the 10th regiment of foot. On the last night of the previous year, he went to the Methodist preaching-house for the first time, heard Mr. Oddie preach, and so deeply was his mind impressed that he continued to attend the services when able. He spent many of his nights in prayers and tears, and it was during one of these seasons of earnest supplication the Lord brought him out of darkness into His marvellous light. He could not define the blessing that he had received; all he knew was that he felt peace in his own soul, that his heart warmed toward the people of God, and that he realized a deep concern for the salvation of others. Now in all the glow of first love, he says of this visit of Wesley and Walsh—"O, what a heaven on earth did I feel in hearing them!"

At Newmarket Mr. Wesley "preached to an earnest congregation of poor people," many of the neighbouring gentry being present at the service the following morning. He then went, for the first time, to Ballingarrane, and was much impressed with the plain, artless, and serious disposition of the Palatines here, many of whom walked in the light of God's countenance, and although not Methodists, met in classes after their example. In examining the Society, the words of these simple-minded people were attended with so much power,

he had frequently to pause, while a general cry arose among the hearers.

Leaving the Palatines, Wesley returned to Limerick. At Ennis he preached in the house of the chief person in the town, "to a huge, wild, unawakened multitude, Protestants and Papists, many of whom would have been rude enough, if they durst." Accompanied by Thomas Walsh he arrived at Galway, where "five or six persons who seemed to fear God" came to them at their lodgings, and they spent a little time in prayer together.

At Hollymount the rector, the Rev. James Clark, readily consenting, Mr. Wesley preached in the church, many Romanists as well as Protestants being present. But on the following Sunday Mr. Clark having selected as his text 1 John iv. 1, took the opportunity of denouncing the Methodists in no measured terms. They were described as "a set of enthusiastic Pharisees in practice, but perfect latitudinarians in principle; quite indifferent as to any form of church government, whether Presbyterian, Independent, or Episcopal, and looking upon the latter in no other light than that of some human law or constitution, subject to be changed at pleasure." In accordance with this, they had "acted in a barefaced defiance to the authority and jurisdiction of the bishops; and without their consent had formed societies, or conventicles, under rules of discipline and government of their own invention, appointing leaders, directors, and superintendents over them. They had set up a new ministry of their own, contrary to the ministry of the Church, committing the preaching of the word of reconciliation, and the exercise of the power of the keys, to mere laymen and mechanics; and, though they occasionally came to church and sacrament, yet they plainly enough insinuated to the world, that they only waited for a seasonable opportunity, and more able heads, to form a new church, and make a total separation." Mr. Clark proceeded to show that in their principles, practices, and pretences, the Methodists were the counterpart of the Montanists, "enthusiastic sectaries, who make the way to heaven much more narrow and difficult than either Jesus Christ or His apostles have made it; and requiring such degrees of perfection

as are not in the power of human nature, in its present state of infirmity, to attain to ; the natural consequence of which is, that such as find themselves unable to arrive at such perfection grow desperate, and give themselves over to all manner of licentiousness ; and such as, through a heated and enthusiastic imagination, fancy that they either actually do or can attain to such perfection, are filled with all manner of spiritual pride, blasphemy, and arrogance." Mr. Clark's hearers were exhorted " never to give ear to the vain and fantastical flights of crazy-pated enthusiasts, schismatical, unauthorized, illegal lay preachers, whose discourses are stuffed with praise and panegyrics of their own righteousness and holiness." *

Wesley had recently published his sermon, entitled " Catholic Spirit," in which he states that he once zealously maintained the opinion that every one born in England ought to be a member of the Church of England, and consequently, to worship God in the manner which that Church prescribes ; but that he could maintain this opinion no longer. He believed the Episcopal form of church government to be scriptural and apostolical ; but he adds, " if you think the Presbyterian or Independent is better, think so still, and act accordingly." Wesley sent a copy of this celebrated sermon to Mr. Clark, and this led to a correspondence, subsequently published in a pamphlet, entitled " Montanus Redivivus." Mr. Clark, in his first letter, states that when he preached his sermon on 1 John iv. 1, Mr. Langston, said to be one of Wesley's lay preachers, was present : and that he suspects his representations to Wesley had induced the latter to send him the sermon on " Catholic Spirit" as " a genteel and tacit reproof, for making any inquiry into the religion and principles of the Methodists." He affirms that Langston had publicly declared " himself to be as righteous and as free from sin as Jesus Christ ; and that it was impossible for him to sin, because the Spirit of God dwelt bodily in him." Mr. Clark further states that he read Wesley's sermon, and that his " propositions and observations have no more foundation in the text than in the first chapter of Genesis." It is right to add that Langston was not one of Wesley's preachers, and that he denied the statements made with regard to himself.

* *Tyerman's Life and Times of Wesley*, II. pp. 373-74.

At Castlebar, the rector, the Rev. Mr. Ellison, having intimated that Mr. Wesley might have the use of the church, he preached there morning and evening to large audiences. Mr. Walsh also addressed a numerous and serious congregation in the Courthouse. A good work was then going on in the town, similar to that in Athlone some years previously. Wesley remarks, "the stream runs very wide, but very shallow." He also preached in Newport church, at the invitation of the rector, the Rev. James Hern. "More than all the Protestants in the town" were present, and "deep attention sat on every face."

After having preached at Aughrim, Ahascragh, and Abbeyderg, Wesley went to Longford, where many supposed the mob would be too violent to allow him a peaceable hearing. A great crowd flocked to the yard of the old barrack where he preached, while many of the Romanists stood at the gate, or just outside the wall. They were all as still as night, nor did he hear an uncivil word, while he walked from one end of the town to the other. Having preached at Cleggill, Coolalough, Tullamore, and Tyrrell's Pass, accompanied by Walsh, he rode to Ballybeg, near Drumcree, where they found "a little company of earnest people, most of them rejoicing in the love of God." To these were added a few from the county of Cavan. Joseph Charles having gone thither some time previously on secular business, spoke of the things of God, many believed his report, and some found his words "the power of God unto salvation."

Such is the brief and simple record of the introduction of Methodism into Cavan. Amongst those who at this early period became more or less connected with Methodism here, were Messrs. Henry and Robert Brooke, who up to 1758 resided at Rantavan. The former was the author of *The Fool of Quality*, *Gustavus Vasa*, and numerous other popular works. Although his theology was not thoroughly Wesleyan, he heartily sympathized with Methodism, to which he was much indebted. The following incident illustrates his readiness and power. One Sunday the congregation having assembled in the parish church, awaited a long time the arrival of the clergyman. At last they requested Mr. Brooke to conduct the service, which he con-

sented to do. Having read the prayers, he opened the Bible, and preached extempore on the first text that arrested his attention. In the middle of his discourse the rector arrived, and found the whole congregation melted into tears. Mr. Robert Brooke became a member of the Methodist Society, and in this respect two at least of his children followed his example, Henry, of whom more again, and Thomas Digby.

At Rosmead on Sunday, July 18th, Mr. Wesley heard a useful sermon from the Rev. Moore Booker in church at noon, and in the afternoon preached himself "to abundance of plain country people, and two coaches full of gentry."

On the following day Wesley first set foot in Ulster, though his preachers had been labouring in the province for nearly six years, with great success. Many had been converted, and a considerable number united together in Christian fellowship. At Newry he preached to a large congregation, and spoke to the members of Society, consisting of Churchmen, Dissenters, Presbyterians, and converts from Romanism. "But there was no striving with them, unless to enter in at the strait gate." At Terryhoogan he was at "a lone house;" but the people found their way thither from all quarters, and he preached in an adjoining meadow.

The evangelists then visited Lisburn. Amongst the earliest who went to hear the Methodist preachers when they visited this town were Mr. and Mrs. Hans Cumberland, a decent, worthy couple, who kept a bakery. The word preached arrested their attention and awakened their consciences. For some time Mrs. Cumberland was in great doubt whether or not to believe the glad tidings she had heard, at times hoping they were true, and again fearing they were not. In this state of uncertainty she prayed earnestly to the Lord for guidance, and determined to continue to do so until she received the needed direction. One day, when in her garden, engaged in prayer, the words were impressed powerfully on her mind, "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations;" and, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Being deeply convinced that this was a message from God in confirmation of the teaching of the itinerants, she became fully satisfied that the doctrines of the

Methodists were of Divine origin, and never more entertained a doubt on the subject. Having thus embraced the truth, she and her husband opened their house for the preaching of the Gospel and the reception of the servants of God, to whom she ever after gave a kind and hospitable welcome.

For years the Society in the town was very small and much despised, and the members were exceedingly poor; yet she was never ashamed of her connection with it; but faithfully and consistently stood forth before all who knew her as an avowed and decided Methodist. It is true that she and her little band of godly associates had not the same persecution to endure to which many of the early Methodists were exposed. This, no doubt, arose partly from the respect in which she herself was held in Lisburn, and partly from the candid and straightforward course adopted by the local clergy. When Mr. Wesley visited the town, being the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Cumberland, he preached in the Market-house, and says with regard to the service: "One man only gainsayed; but the bystanders used him so roughly that he was glad to hold his peace." The next day the rector and his curate called on the father of Methodism, proposed their objections, and spent about two hours in friendly conversation. "How much evil," Mr. Wesley observes, "might be prevented or removed, would other clergymen follow their example!" There was evidently no lack of religious denominations in Lisburn. Wesley says, on his return to the town, "Between Seceders, Presbyterians, Newlightmen, Moravians, Cameronians, and formal Churchmen, it will be a miracle of miracles if any here bring forth fruit to perfection."

At Belfast he preached in the Market-house to as large a congregation as at Lisburn: and again to nearly the same number on the following morning, although some did not stay until he concluded, but went away in haste, when he showed how "Christ crucified is to the Greeks foolishness." At this period there were only seventeen hundred and seventy-nine dwelling houses in the town, most of them thatched, and a population of eight thousand five hundred and forty-nine. There was only one Episcopalian place of worship, the "Old Corporation Church," as it was called, in High street; and

three Presbyterian meeting-houses, the minister of one of which was an Arian.

At Carrickfergus Wesley preached in the Session-house to most of the inhabitants of the town ; but was opposed by a poor enthusiast, named James Reilly, who began "a dull, pointless harangue about hirelings and false prophets ;" but the doorkeeper cut his discourse short by intimating that he was about to lock up. At his second attempt "he cawed and cawed, but could utter nothing, hardly three words together." Wesley preached, at the desire of the prisoners, near the gaol that the inmates might hear him. On Sunday he went to church, and heard a lively, useful sermon ; but shocked one of the Methodists, who asked him to go to the Presbyterian service, by saying, "I never go to meeting." "He seemed," says the earnest evangelist, "as much astonished as the old Scot at Newcastle, who left us because we were mere Church of England men. We are so, although we condemn none who have been brought up another way."

In the meantime Thomas Walsh had visited Newtownards, where he was most cruelly treated. He attempted to conduct an open-air service, but while at prayer a man named Mortimer came with a large mob, seized him by the throat, and dragged him along. At length a Mr. Beers compelled the ruffian to let go his hold, for which kind act he was himself soon struck to the ground. Walsh made a second attempt to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation, but Mortimer having rallied his mob, returned to the assault, effectively stopped the service, and compelled the preacher to escape for his life. In hurrying through the fields to the mountain, Walsh received a wetting which laid the foundations of the disease that hastened him to the grave.

The man who had thus persecuted Walsh in Newtownards followed him to Lisburn, for the same wicked purpose, and endeavoured from the window of an inn to stir up the people to violence ; but was quickly stopped by an honest butcher, who drew his knife, and raised a party in defence of the faithful preacher, so that the persecutor had to make a rather ignominious exit from the town.

At Lurgan Wesley preached in the Market-house to the

largest congregation he had seen since he left Cork. On August 11th he set sail for England, with Messrs. Walsh, Haughton, and Morgan, having spent nineteen weeks in Ireland.

At this period Augustus Montague Toplady was converted, through the Divine blessing on the labours of an Irish preacher. He was the son of a major in the army, received the rudiments of his education at Westminster school, and thence came, with his widowed mother, to Ireland to pursue claims to an estate. A little before he was sixteen years of age he heard James Morris preach at Coolamain,* in the parish of Ballynaslaney, Wexford, and was then led to give his heart to God. Nearly two years subsequently he writes: "That sweet text, Ephesians ii. 13, was particularly delightful and refreshing to my soul; and the more so, as it reminded me of the days and months that are past, even the day of my sensible espousals to the Bridegroom of the elect. It was from that passage that Mr. Morris preached on the memorable evening of my effectual call by the grace of God, under the ministry of that dear messenger; and under that sermon I was, I trust, brought nigh by the blood of Christ, in August 1756. Strange that I, who had so long sat under the means of grace in England, should be brought nigh to God in an obscure part of Ireland, amidst a handful of God's people met together in a barn, and under the ministry of one who could hardly spell his name."

At the Conference held in Bristol on August 26th, Messrs. Hopper, Murlin, Olivers, Gilbert and Massiot—a native of Cork—were appointed to labour in Ireland in place of the three preachers who had left the country with Mr. Wesley. They embarked together on September 15th, and on the 19th, being within sight of land, and wearied with their protracted and dangerous voyage, left the ship in a fishing boat. Having rowed for some hours, they landed at Robertstown Cove, about twenty miles from Cork. Here they were strangers, in a strange country, and among a people of a strange language. There was not an inn, or a private house in the little village that could give them a night's lodging. The day was spent,

* Misprinted Codymain, evidently for Coolymain, as it is frequently misspelled.

and as they stood looking at each other in bewilderment, God raised up a friend in an honest farmer, a Romanist, who took the travellers home to his house, and showed them great kindness. Next morning their host supplied them with horses, and a servant to conduct them to Cork.

Mr. Hopper spent a few days in this city, preached night and morning, and visited the brethren from house to house. He then set out for Dublin, where he laboured during the winter "with pleasure and profit."

Thomas Olivers is well-known as the author of the hymn beginning "The God of Abraham praise," and also as the renowned opponent of A. M. Toplady in the celebrated Calvinistic controversy of the last century. He says he spent this year chiefly in and about Limerick, Waterford and Cork.

John Murlin was a man of great integrity, deep sincerity, and evident piety : and of such tender sensibility when preaching the Gospel, that he obtained the name of "the weeping prophet." He says : "This year I had trials and consolations, and I hope some small success in my feeble labours."

Chapter IX.

1757.

EARLY in 1757 Thomas Olivers was stationed on the Limerick circuit, where God was pleased to own his labours much, many soldiers as well as others being converted. Mrs. Bennis says he gave special prominence in his preaching to the subject of entire sanctification, but there were few in the city who received his testimony. With the Palatines, however, it was different. He sent an account of the work of holiness amongst these simple-minded, earnest people to Mr. Wesley, who replied on March 24th, saying, that care should be taken not to be either forward or backward in believing the testimony of those who affirmed they had obtained the blessing ; that merely to be unconscious of sin, or to feel constant peace, joy, and love, was not sufficient evidence of this ; that it implied salvation from all sin, inward and outward, into all holiness ;

that a growth in grace precedes it, but the gift itself is always instantaneous ; and that one fruit is a direct positive testimony of the Spirit that the work is done.

At this time Mr. Hopper was in Cork, where he spent two months. He says he had much satisfaction in his work ; but was not without temptations and trials. He met with reproaches and many cruel mockings ; but found that the Spirit rested upon him, and gave him the victory over reproach and shame. He succeeded Mr. Olivers at Limerick, where he met with some severe trials, but the Lord delivered him. He then set out for Dublin ; and while here the Rev. G. Whitefield paid his third visit to the country.

The previous visit of the eloquent evangelist to the metropolis had been greatly blessed, and the people longed to give him another welcome. His reception, therefore, was as cordial as formerly. The congregations which attended his ministrations in Whitefriar street chapel were very large, and the people seemed much impressed. All classes attended, and all were affected. A spirit of conviction and consolation appeared to be sent forth, and many were heard inquiring, " What must we do to be saved ? " One of the bishops told a nobleman that he was glad Mr. Whitefield had come to rouse the people.

On Sunday afternoon, July 3rd, Mr. Whitefield narrowly escaped with life. During his former visit he had preached once or twice on Oxmantown Green, which he describes as the Moorfields of Ireland ; and mindful, no doubt, of his success here, resolved to take the field again, relying upon the interference of the officers and soldiers, if he should stand in need of protection. So accompanied by three or four of the preachers and a soldier, he repaired thither : and sang, preached and prayed with no further molestation than the throwing of a few stones and clods of dirt. After the sermon he prayed for success to the Prussian arms, it being in time of war. Whether this petition offended the party spirit of his hearers, or whether the mere fact of his being in the eyes of the Romanists a heretic, who went about seeking to make proselytes, had excited them, a determined spirit of vengeance was roused. The barracks, through which he had intended to return as he had come, were closed against him, and when he endeavoured to

make his way across the Green, "hundreds and hundreds of Papists" assailed him. "Many attacks," he says, "have I had from Satan's children, but now you would have thought they were permitted to give me an effectual parting blow." Volleys of stones came from all quarters, while he reeled to and fro under the blows, till he was almost breathless and covered with blood. A strong beaver hat, which served for a while as a skull cap, was knocked off at last, and he then received many blows and wounds in the head, and one serious one near the temple. "I thought of Stephen," says he, "and was in great hope that, like him, I should be despatched, and go off in this bloody triumph to the immediate presence of my Master." Providentially the door of a minister's house was opened, and staggering in he found a temporary refuge. On entering he was speechless, but gradually revived: when the minister's wife, fearing that his presence would lead to the destruction of her dwelling, desired his absence. What to do he knew not, being about a mile from Whitefriar street preaching-house. However, a carpenter offered him his wig and coat to disguise himself; but just at the same moment one of the preachers and two other friends brought a coach. "I leaped into it," he writes, "and rode in gospel triumph through the oaths, curses, and imprecations of whole streets of Papists." The weeping, mourning, but now joyful Methodists received him with inconceivable affection. A Christian surgeon dressed his wounds; and then he went into the chapel, and joined in a hymn of praise and thanksgiving to Him who "stilleth the noise of the seas and the tumult of the people."

Next morning Mr. Whitefield set out for Portarlington. Having preached there he proceeded to Athlone. While in this town he was the guest of Mrs. Teare, whose husband had gone to Virginia to claim some property. Mr. Whitefield not seeing any man in the house, supposed his hostess to be a widow and in prayer was very pathetic in imploring the Divine blessing on her and her children; expressing his desire that she might always have a heart and a house to receive the Lord's prophets; that it might be with her as with the widow of Zarephath, whose barrel of meal wasted not, and whose cruse of oil did not fail; that she might never want a sufficiency

for her own household, nor a portion to spare for the cause of God. After Mr. Whitefield had concluded, being informed of his mistake, he said that he was glad to hear that it was so; yet rather wondered that his mind had been so peculiarly drawn out in praying for her as a widow. A little time, however, threw more light on the subject, and made it appear that Mr. Teare was actually dead when the prayer was uttered: and as that prayer was undoubtedly suggested by the Spirit which "maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God," so it was remarkably answered in the subsequent life of Mrs. Teare.

Mr. Whitefield then visited Limerick and Cork. He writes from the latter city: "Everywhere the glorious Emmanuel so smiles upon my feeble efforts, that it is hard to get off. At Portarlington, Athlone, Limerick, and in this place, the word has run, and been glorified. Arrows of conviction seem to fly, and the cup of many has been made to run over." And again, three weeks later he says: "At Athlone, Limerick, Cork, and especially at Dublin, where I preached fifty times, we had Cambuslang seasons. With the utmost difficulty I came away." This was his last visit to Ireland.

During Whitefield's stay in Cork he was the guest of Mr. Trembath. John Murray, then a Methodist, but subsequently the founder of the Universalists in America, was invited to meet him, and was charmed with his eloquent words and stirring narratives. He had long admired the master of the house, but had not seen his wife before. "Her person," he says, "was uncommonly elegant, and her face dazlingly beautiful. She had received a useful as well as a fashionable education, and was mistress of all the polite accomplishments." The whole household intensely impressed the mind of Murray. Soon, alas! this scene was completely changed. Not long afterwards the rich, beautiful, and accomplished young wife quitted her husband, children and widowed mother, and accompanied a private soldier to America, where she spent the rest of her wretched life in poverty and sin.

Poor Trembath seems to have had one trouble after another, until he was reduced to the greatest want. When Wesley was

in Cornwall in 1782, he says he met a white-headed old man, who caught him by the hand, and said, "Sir, do you not know me?" Wesley answered "No." The stranger then plaintively exclaimed, "My father, my father! I am poor John Trembath." It subsequently appeared that he had been for some time in extreme poverty, so as to hedge and ditch for bread; but in his distress he cried unto God, who sent him an answer of peace. Knowing something of the healing art, he began to practise it, and with the Lord's blessing succeeded in several cases until he gained a reputation and thus obtained a competency. "And now," said he, "I want for nothing. I am happier than I ever was in my life." A month after this strange interview Trembath wrote to Wesley, "Though God has forgiven me, yet I cannot forgive myself for the precious time I have wasted, the years I have lost, and the glorious harvest I have neglected." Poor Trembath died of paralysis, at Cork, about the year 1793.

Of the arrangements made with regard to Ireland at the Conference held in London there are few details available. Thomas Walsh, J. Murlin, T. Olivers, and L. Coughlan received appointments in England. J. Morgan, P. Greenwood, M. Davis, J. Oddie, C. Hopper, T. Kead, N. Gilbert, and Thomas Johnson were stationed on this side of the Channel. Thomas Johnson was a Yorkshireman, who was converted in 1748, and began his itinerant labours in 1752. As a preacher he was generally acceptable and useful.

Soon after the Conference, however, William Thompson was received on trial. He was a native of Fermanagh, and had probably gone up to the metropolis to enter business; and when in Dublin, through God's blessing on the labours of Methodism, was led to Christian decision. He afterwards proved to be an able preacher and a valued counsellor of his brethren.

D. Wright was at this period quartered in Dublin, where he found fellowship with the people of God a means of great spiritual blessing. The preachers, he says, were lively, and faithful lovers of discipline. The members retained much of their simplicity and teachableness, and were in a good degree prepared for the revival which followed some time after. Few

cared to stay amongst them but such as retained their fervour. False brethren especially were soon tired, and went to the Baptists or Moravians. Every Sabbath the Methodists used to crowd to the Sacrament of the Lord's supper at St. Patrick's, which proved a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.

Amongst those who then became identified with Methodism in the metropolis, and for many years occupied a prominent position in the Society, there were Mr. Thomas Garrett and his daughter, Mrs. Dorothea King. The former was a native of Holland, who had settled in Dublin, and, not having succeeded in business, became largely indebted to a man named King, who threatened to cast him into prison and ruin him, if he did not give him in marriage his only daughter, then a beautiful girl a little over sixteen years of age. Shocking as this proposal was, the brave and devoted child resolved to accept it rather than that her father should suffer. As might have been anticipated, the consequent union proved a most unhappy one. Indeed, so gross and cruel was the treatment which the young wife received from her husband, that at length she was compelled to return to her father's house. The bitter sorrow which Mr. Garrett felt on account of his daughter being thus sacrificed, and the severe sufferings which she endured, were evidently sanctified to both parent and child, in leading them to seek the consolations and blessings of true religion. During the visit of the Rev. G. Whitefield to Dublin, Mrs. King was awakened to a deep sense of her sinfulness, and on the 15th of December following was enabled to rest on the Lord Jesus as her Saviour. Within two years she had the great joy of seeing her father rejoice in a sense of sins forgiven; for, although Mr. Wesley speaks of him at their first meeting, in 1756, as "one of the most lovely old men he ever saw," it was not until some time subsequently that he fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before him in the Gospel.

Slowly but steadily Methodism continued to spread both in the north and west. At Newtownards the spirit of persecution manifested against Thomas Walsh did not prevent other efforts to reach the people which proved successful. The very opposition raised to the Methodists in the town seems to have

contributed to their success in directing public attention to them and in calling for the interference of the authorities for their protection.

Comber was the third place in the county of Down into which Methodism was introduced, having been preceded by Newry and Newtownards. Notwithstanding the intense opposition of the local ministers, both Episcopal and Presbyterian, a promising Society was formed here. The Presbyterian minister expelled from the Lord's table all who had become Methodists; but subsequently saw his folly, and sent his elders to invite them back to the ordinances. About this time, within seven miles of Comber, there lived a blind young woman, named Margaret Davidson, who had been brought under deep convictions of sin, and was enabled by Divine grace to lay hold of Christ as her Saviour. But her profession of religion exposed her to bitter opposition. While this poor but godly young woman was surrounded by those who had no sympathy with her religion, and endeavoured in every way to subvert it, she heard rumours of the labours of the Methodist preachers, the opinions they held, and the effects said to have been produced under their ministry. These were so fully in accord with her own experience, that she longed to hear them; but as they did not, at this period, visit any place nearer than Comber, she was unable to gratify her desire. She therefore had recourse to prayer, and not in vain. Soon afterwards, to her delight, she heard one neighbour inquire of another, if he would go to hear the Methodists on the following Sunday morning. The place announced was only two miles distant, and thus the difficulty of travelling was lessened, though not removed. Her parents would not permit her to go on any account. "She is mad enough already," they said, "and these deceivers will make her far worse, if possible." But she was determined to be present, and succeeded, notwithstanding the almost insurmountable obstacles in her way. The preacher was Mr. James Oddie, and the first words the poor, sightless, and weary girl heard were:

"Ye blind, behold your Saviour come;
And leap, ye lame, for joy."

And she did see Jesus, and her heart danced for gladness; for the Word preached was greatly blessed to her soul. She and many others of the congregation subsequently went to meeting and heard the minister denounce in unmeasured terms the new sect, having, with wondrous sagacity, selected as his text that terse and telling description of Paul and Silas: "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also."

It is probable that during this year Methodism was introduced into Sligo, most likely by some person who had been connected with the Society at Drummernave, and having settled in the town invited the preacher then on the Castlebar round to his house. The name of the itinerant, who preached the first Methodist sermon in the town is not mentioned, but something is known of his reception. The rector, the Rev. Eubel Ormsby, was unwilling to interfere with the preacher; but his more zealous curate hastened to rid the parish of the disturber of its peace, by arresting and bringing him before a magistrate. Mr. Ormsby, on hearing this, proceeded to the office in which the parties were assembled, and addressing the curate said, "Andrew, Andrew, let these men alone. Remember the advice of Gamaliel." This prompt interposition prevented further persecution, and from that day to the present Methodism has had little opposition to encounter in Sligo.

Chapter X.

1758

IN the spring of 1758, Cootehill was first visited by a Methodist preacher; his name was Thomas Kead, a man whose heart was full of love to Christ and love for souls. He took his stand in the street, and, having sung a hymn and prayed, announced his text: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Amongst those who gathered around the stranger was a man named John Smith, who had lived a roving and

notoriously wicked life ; but had been brought under very deep conviction of sin. He drank in every word. The sermon just met his case. He thought that the whole discourse was aimed at himself ; it seemed as if the preacher knew both his heart and life, so fully and truthfully did he describe his state and feelings. And when the evangelist held forth the Lord Jesus as the only and all-sufficient Saviour, and proclaimed through Him forgiveness of sins to all that believe, the soul of the poor penitent was filled with wonder. He thought, " And yet there can be no doubt about this. ' Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,' even the ' chief' of sinners. He ' tasted death for every man.' He says, ' Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.' " The veil of unbelief was removed ; the love of Christ drove him away all guilt and fear, and filled his soul with light, love and joy. He could no more doubt his acceptance with God through Christ than his existence. The gospel messenger gladly availed himself of the opportunity of giving the young convert suitable instruction, and then they separated, John Smith exulting in the possession of the pearl of great price, and his friend rejoicing over this latest seal to his ministry. John Smith was now a new man—a wonder to himself, his family, and all who knew him. With a heart filled with gratitude, he eagerly seized every opportunity of telling others what a Saviour he had found ; and thus good impressions were made on the minds of many.

On March 31st Mr. Wesley arrived in Dublin, with Francis Okeley, a Moravian minister of much learning and piety, and of a truly catholic spirit. Here he spent nearly a month, and found to his great annoyance that the five o'clock morning preaching had been discontinued for nearly a year and a half ; and that self-denial among the people had been neither seen nor heard of since T. Walsh left the island. Nothing was wanting but rigorous discipline, which was more needful in this than in any other nation. " The people in general being so soft and delicate, that the least slackness utterly destroys them." One evening he read letters to the Society, during which a poor backslider was cut to the heart, and determined to return to Him from whom he had long and so far wandered.

Wesley set apart a day for fasting and prayer, and also held a covenant service, which proved a gracious season. He met all the married men and women of the Society, and "brought strange things to their ears" respecting the duties of husbands, wives, and parents.

While in the metropolis he was drawn into a controversy with a Miss H——,* on the doctrine of Christian perfection—a subject that occupied considerable attention in Methodist circles at this time. She complained that some of the preachers placed the doctrine in a dreadful light; one of them affirming "that a believer, till perfect, is under the curse of God and in a state of damnation;" and another saying, "If you die before you have obtained it, you will surely perish." Wesley replied to these misstatements in a long letter, dated April 5th, in which he repudiates such sentiments. He admits that young men may have said these things; but their doctrines were not his.

Mr. Okeley gives his impression of his visit to Dublin thus: "Great numbers attend the preaching with attention and seriousness. By visiting from house-to-house with Mr. Wesley I got acquainted with many agreeable people. I have been surprised to find Dublin every way exceeding my expectations. Surely it is not right for one side of the water to overvalue themselves and undervalue others so much."

On April 24, Wesley, accompanied by Okeley and Swindells, left Dublin on an excursion through the provinces. At Edenderry he preached under the castle wall to a large congregation. At Portarlinton he "was much concerned for his rich, gay hearers." He visited Closeland for the last time, as Mr. Laborde, who resided there, soon after passed to the home above. At Mountmellick most of the Protestants of the town were present, and even many Roman Catholics were observed within hearing distance. Bitter contention, however, had well nigh torn the Society in pieces; but, with God's blessing, a cordial reconciliation now took place. At Tullamore a large number of Protestants, many Romanists, and almost all the troopers in the town attended. At Drumcree

* Probably Miss Hoar, afterwards married to Mr. John Johnson.

Wesley preached in the new chapel, "built in the taste of the country," with thatched roof and mud walls. At Rosmead he preached in the church for the last time, Mr. Booker himself standing at the door to receive the collection, which was on behalf of a local charity. During the following autumn this clergyman accompanied the Earl of Drogheda, as his chaplain, to England; and on returning they embarked with about eighty others at Parkgate, in the Chester Trader, which foundered on the coast of Scotland, and all on board perished.

To return to the itinerants, at Terryhoogan they found a room built for the Methodist preachers, three yards long, two and a quarter broad, and six feet high; the walls, floor, and ceiling mud; and the furniture a clean chaff bed. All the inhabitants of the village, with many others, were present at the morning five o'clock service, including a poor woman who had walked seven miles, with her child ten days old, to have it baptized by the founder of Methodism. At Lisburn "abundance of people attended the preaching in the evening, as well as in the morning." Wesley visited Comber and Newtownards for the first time. At the latter he addressed the largest congregation he had seen in the kingdom, the members of which were quiet and attentive, and at the close of the service went away greatly impressed. At Belfast he preached in the Market-house, and at Carrickfergus in the Courthouse. At Larne his pulpit was a table, and his congregation nearly all the inhabitants of the town.

Although not noticed in his Journal, Wesley at this time visited Clonmain, as there was present at the service a lad twelve years of age, named George Gainer, who accompanied his grandfather, and says: "We arrived just in time to see Mr. Wesley ascend the table, when his venerable appearance made such an impression on my mind that I looked on him no longer as an earthly man, but as one that was heavenly and divine. His words also were clothed with power, so I thought the gods were come down to us."

Mr. Wesley first visited Cootehill on May 22nd, and preached in the Market-place, the congregation was "tolerably serious." And when again, on the following morning at six o'clock, the venerated founder of Methodism proclaimed the

glad tidings of salvation, there were still more who "seemed to feel as well as hear." This visit led to the formation of a Methodist Society in the town, composed of a few persons, in humble circumstances, who, as the result of the labours of Thomas Kead, John Smith and Mr. Wesley, had "a desire to flee from the wrath to come," and "to be saved from their sins."

On Wesley visiting Dingins, in the county of Cavan. "Many came from far, a few of whom had tasted that the Lord is gracious." At Granard he preached in the Barrack yard to a congregation, and he had rarely, in a new place, seen one so much affected. At Edgeworthstown his audience was very respectable; but at Longford, where he preached in the yard of the inn, the gathering consisted of "the rudest, surliest, wildest people," he had met in Ireland. At Drummersnave he lodged in the house of the only gentleman in the town, of whose wife he says, she adorned the Gospel.

Having heard of the opening in Sligo, he set out for that town, and rode a distance of forty-three miles, through Ballymote, Collooney, and Ballysodare, and was impressed both with the number of the population, and with the carefulness with which the land was cultivated, even to the very tops of the mountains. On arriving at the end of his journey, he found the town in possession of a mob, that had seized the corn brought to the market, and sold it for the owners at the ordinary price, to prevent its being exported. This was done with "all the calmness and composure imaginable, and without striking or hurting anyone." Mr. Wesley preached in the evening, near the main street, "to a small, quiet, serious company;" and twice on the following Sabbath, in the Market-house to increasing congregations, including some who were "rich and genteel." The prospect was cheering, and arrangements were made for the regular visitation of the town by the preacher stationed at Castlebar.

At Newport, all the Protestants of the town attended the service. At Hollymount, Wesley preached in the churchyard, and then visited his former antagonist, the Rev. James Clark, who was extremely ill. At Manulla he found, to his surprise, the Romanists unchanged, retaining the same bitterness and thirst for blood as ever, and as ready to cut the throats of

Protestants, as they had been in the previous century. At Castlebar he administered the Lord's supper—the first recorded instance in Ireland—to above sixty persons. Here also in a letter to Mr. Blackwell he records his impression of the country thus : "I have now gone through the greatest part of this kingdom, Leinster, Ulster, and the greatest half of Connaught. Time only is wanting. If my brother could take care of England, and give me but one year for Ireland, I think every corner of this nation would receive the truth as it is in Jesus. They want only to hear it; and they will hear me, high and low, rich and poor. What a mystery of Providence is this! In England they may hear, but will not. In Ireland they fain would hear, but cannot. So in both, thousands perish for lack of knowledge. So much the more blessed are your ears, for they hear; if you not only hear the word of God, but keep it."

At Aughrim Mr. Wesley says he found a few and left more striving to enter in at the strait gate. Some time previous to this the Hon. and Rev. Walter Shirley had been appointed rector of Loughrea. He was cousin to Lady Huntingdon, and three of his brothers were successively Earls Ferrers. On entering the ministry he was altogether destitute of the knowledge of true religion. He kept a pack of hounds, and was the promoter of every amusement in the parish, which made him a great favourite with the Roman Catholics, as well as Protestants. It was nothing uncommon with him to enter the pulpit booted and spurred, the dogs being kept in waiting outside the town, and at the close of the service all proceeded to the hunt. But he was arrested in this sinful course, and led to the Saviour. He sold his dogs and superfluous horses, and entered earnestly into the responsible duties of his office. The Rev. H. Moore says that Mr. Wesley was the principal instrument of Mr. Shirley's conversion, and although Wesley's silence on the subject is ominous, this statement agrees with the fact that Wesley was at Aughrim, not far from Loughrea, about the time Mr. Shirley decided for God. There can be but little doubt that whoever was the means of leading him to the Saviour, it was through Methodism in Ireland he was awakened to a concern for his soul. Thus the Lord raised up

at least one minister in the Irish Episcopal Church who took a decided and open stand for evangelical truth.

Meanwhile Wesley proceeded on his tour. At Ahascragh four-fifths of his congregation were Romanists. At Athlone, as usual, the Sunday afternoon congregation on the Connaught side of the river consisted of large numbers of Roman Catholics as well as Protestants. At Coolalough he held the quarterly meeting, and preached to the largest congregation he had seen there.

At Limerick, where he was the guest of Mr. Beauchamp, he met T. Walsh "alive, and but just alive." The zeal of this extraordinary man was such that as he truly said of himself, the sword was too sharp for the scabbard. At five-and-twenty he might have been taken for forty years of age; and he literally wore himself out by the most unremitting and unmerciful labours both of body and mind. His sermons were seldom less than an hour long, and they were loud as well as long. At study he frequently sat up late, and his general time of rising was at four. When intreated by one who saw that his life was wasting away, to allow himself more sleep, his reply was, "Should a man rob God?" In the middle of April he had landed at Cork, from England, with all the sad and familiar symptoms of consumption, which became more and more marked; and now he was pronounced in the last stage of this disease, and consequently beyond the reach of human help.

On June 21st the third Irish Conference began at Limerick, fourteen preachers being present. All things were settled which they judged would be beneficial, and they consulted how to remove whatever might be a hindrance to the work of God. Objection having been made to the doctrinal views of Mr. Davis, Mr. Walsh, who was present and knew him well, rose and said—"Brother Davis is a wise and good man, and these objections to his phraseology will soon be done away when he becomes more acquainted with the writings of the Methodists." This testimony was well received by Mr. Wesley and the brethren, and Mr. Davis was appointed to a circuit.

At Courtmatrix a pretty large preaching house had been built; but it could not contain half the congregation that assembled to hear Wesley preach. This chapel was erected

mainly through the exertions of Philip Embury, who himself assisted at the manual work. Mary Switzer lived at the settlement here, and on 27th November following she became his wife and the honoured partner of his struggles and victories. With regard to the great moral change that had been wrought in the Palatines, Wesley says, that although they had been eminent for drunkenness and profane swearing, "an oath was now rarely heard among them, or a drunkard seen in their borders." In a large green enclosure, on an island near Limerick, formerly used by Cromwell as a camp, Wesley preached to such a congregation as he had not seen since he left London. At Clare his audience in the street consisted of many poor Romanists and rich Protestants. At Ennis nine in ten of those who came to hear were Roman Catholics, and none spoke an unkind or uncivil word.

On July 6th James Massiot died in peace at Cork, being the first of the Irish preachers called hence. Wesley arrived at the city just in time to conduct the burial service and preach the funeral sermon. Many of the Society in Cork, at this time, were truly alive to God; old misunderstandings having been removed, the members were united together as they had not been for years. At a meeting of the children, one Sunday afternoon, many of them became so deeply affected that they could not refrain from crying aloud for mercy. When prayer was offered their spiritual anxiety increased, and thus a blessed work of revival began amongst these young people.

Wesley made brief excursions from Cork to Bandon, Kinsale, and Inishannon. At Bandon he was accompanied by James Morgan, and preached in the Market-house to a large audience, and also in the shell of a new preaching-house, the foundation of which had only been laid a fortnight previous. This chapel stood on Kilbrogan hill, and in time had a gallery all round, in one corner of which was a room, made with movable partitions, for the use of preachers. When necessary the partitions were raised that additional accommodation might be afforded the congregation. At Kinsale there was a large representation of the military, many of whom were good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

Wesley's experience of the difficulties attending on getting out of port, forms a striking contrast to the regularity and punctuality of steamships. On August 1st the captain with whom he intended to sail was most eager to have everything on board ; but on the day following there was nothing ready. On the 5th the passengers were called on board with all haste, but no start was made. On the next day further information was given about leaving ; but no captain appeared, and Wesley, that he might not be idle, went down to the beach at Cove, and preached to as wild and unpromising a congregation as he had seen in the kingdom, although they became increasingly quiet and attentive, and some at length appeared deeply affected. Hearing nothing of the captain, Wesley preached again in the town both on the 7th and 8th. Soon after the close of the latter service, he, accompanied by J. Morgan, having got on board another vessel, set sail just a week after the time fixed for the sailing of the ship he was now compelled to abandon.

In the meantime Messrs. Hopper, Greenwood, T. Johnson, and Gilbert, had embarked at Dublin for England, to attend the Conference held in Bristol on August 13th and succeeding days. W. Thompson was then received into full connexion, and the following preachers were appointed to labour in Ireland :—Messrs. Jaco, J. Johnson, Seccomb, Deaves, Manners, Brisco, Swindells, Walsh, Kead, and Davis, four of whom now came to the country for the first time. Peter Jaco, the Assistant in Ireland, was a native of Cornwall, remarkably comely in person, with a strong and clear intellect, well stored by diligent study, and his labours were much owned of the Lord. John Johnson, born in Somersetshire, was a man of deep Christian experience, a plain earnest preacher, and highly esteemed by Mr. Wesley and his brethren. His name will frequently appear in the following pages. John Manners is described by Mr. Wesley as “ a plain man, and not eloquent, but rather rude in speech ; ” yet he was remarkably useful during his brief public ministry. Thomas Brisco was “ a sensible well-read man, and by no means a weak preacher.”

Soon after the Conference, Mr. Deaves wrote to Mr. Wesley from Castlebar, giving an account of his labours. He had been to Aughrim, where he was employed reconciling some

brethren who had been at odds and in danger of rending the Society. He reports a revival at Birr, where a number had tasted of the love of God, and some of them had united with the Society. He also appears to have been assisted by Mr. Charles, of Drumcree, during the absence of the preachers at the English Conference.

On September 16th Mr. Johnson landed at Dublin, where he spent a few days, and then left for Ulster. Here, he says, large congregations attended his ministry, yet but few that he knew were convinced of sin, though he laboured three months among them.

At the close of the year D. Wright was again quartered in Limerick. While here the Government having resolved to shoot a deserter in every city, the lot fell on a young man in his regiment, named Newton, who was kept close in the guard-house. Wright succeeded in obtaining an opportunity of visiting him; found the poor fellow weeping as if his heart would break, and reading the "Whole Duty of Man" with intense earnestness; and spoke and prayed with him and his fellow-soldiers with an unexpected freedom. The visit was repeated twice or three times each day, until at length the poor criminal realized peace and joy in believing; and from that time witnessed a good confession to all that spoke to him. Those who saw him go to the place of execution could not but admire the settled peace that appeared in his countenance. He said but little; but his calm and triumphant death made a deep impression on the minds of many of the soldiers. Wright thought that this was the time to try what he could do among his comrades, and therefore told several that as many as desired might come to his room every night after roll-call, and he would sing, read, and pray with them. They came and crowded his room, and, in answer to prayer, a number having become awakened to a sense of their state, he formed them into a class.

Only a little more than eleven years had now passed since Methodism was introduced into Ireland, yet it had already made its way into every county, except Kerry, and many in each, through the blessing of God on its labours, were happy possessors of the sense of sins forgiven. These would, doubtless, have been even more numerous had not such strenuous

efforts been put forth by both Protestants and Roman Catholics; to prevent the people hearing, and laying to heart the Word which is able to save the soul.

Chapter XII.

1759.

IN January, 1759, Mr. Johnson was removed from the North to Dublin. Here at first he met with much opposition on account of his rough manners and strict attention to discipline. When some complained that his mode of procedure would not do in this country, he replied, if it was profitable in England it might be so in Ireland also. In a few weeks, however, the people began to feel that they had lost ground, and resolved with one accord, through grace, to dedicate themselves afresh to the service of God. The congregations now increased much, and before his three months in the city were ended, many were awakened to a sense of their state, and became members of the Society.

Of the little band of Methodists in Cooteshill, John Smith was appointed the leader. True, he was but recently converted like themselves, and unskilled in the Word of righteousness; but faith, perseverance in prayer, and diligent study, soon supplied all that was lacking. If these poor people, by becoming members of the Society, enjoyed privileges unspeakably precious to them, they also exposed themselves to bitter persecution. Members of the different Churches in the town soon began to oppose the little band, cavilling at their opinions, questioning the sincerity of their professions, mocking them in their presence, and slandering them in their absence. Their malice, however, was chiefly directed against John Smith, not only as the most zealous of the Methodists, but especially as one on whose behalf numerous and remarkable deliverances were wrought. Hence he was called a demoniac, and charged, like his blessed Master, with

being in league with the devil. They did not, however, confine themselves to malicious statements, but proceeded to use physical violence. They collected mobs, surrounded the place of meeting, seized the worshippers, knocked them down, beat, and even dragged them through cess-pools and sewers. Still John Smith steadily and faithfully did his duty, never offering the slightest resistance, but rejoicing that he was "counted worthy to suffer" for Christ's name. These severe trials were overruled by Providence for good. None joined the little band but such as were thoroughly in earnest and ready to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, and the members of the Society were drawn still more closely together. Owing to the divine blessing on the faithful labours of these devoted people, their meekness under provocation, and the integrity of their lives, several persons of a higher social position joined the Society, and others began to attend the public services, by whose influence open persecution was brought to an end.

Meantime the sainted Walsh was sinking rapidly into the grave. He had left the city of Limerick for the purer air of the place of his nativity, where he had not only the attention of his own family, but also that of the Guiers, Emburys, Hecks, and a host of others, with kind hearts and willing hands to minister to his comfort. At length, at his own request, he was removed to Dublin, where he resided in one of the rooms over the chapel in Whitefriar street. From the nature of his disorder, intensified by the mistaken treatment of his physician, which was taken advantage of by Satan, he passed through a lengthened and most distressing period of mental conflict and gloom; and his great soul lay, as it were, in ruins for some time. It was the "hour and power of darkness." Like his gracious Redeemer, he "offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him who was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared." The Lord having appeared to his help, all doubts were dispelled, heaven's light shone around him, as in a transport of holy exultation he cried, "He is come! He is come! My Beloved is mine, and I am His; His for ever;" and his pure and noble spirit passed away to the Paradise of God. His remains were laid in a grave-

yard, called "The Cabbage Garden," because it was once so used, but subsequently enclosed as the burial-ground of the parish of St. Nicholas Without. Here many of the early Methodists of Dublin sleep until the morning of the resurrection.

D. Wright, who had been sent to Scotland early in the year, on recruiting service, after an absence of four months, now returned to his regiment, which lay encamped near Kilkenny, and found his little flock scattered. The first morning they met, after his return, there were but three present, but the numbers increased at each subsequent meeting, until the Society was again gathered.

The English Conference was held this year in London, August 8-11, and throughout was marked by great unanimity and love. The following preachers appear to have been appointed to Ireland:—Messrs. Jaco, who was general superintendent, J. Johnson, Seccomb, Morgan, Davis, Fisher, Deaves, Kead, Ley, Penington, and Glassbrook. Wm. Penington, a native of Knaresborough, had only just entered the itinerancy. He was a young man of deep piety, and a faithful and successful preacher of the Gospel.

The stand which the Hon. and Rev. W. Shirley took for evangelical truth exposed him to not a little abuse and persecution. So far as his parishioners were concerned this soon subsided, as they could not fail to see that he sought their real welfare; but it was different with his brother clergy, and especially his own curate. On one occasion, his diocesan, the Bishop of Clonfert, with his Archdeacon and the curate, went to consult with Dr. John Ryder, Archbishop of Tuam, how they might proceed against him, and the Archbishop, with much candour and good humour, subsequently told Mr. Shirley what had passed. "Do you know," said his Grace, "that your Bishop, your Archdeacon, and your own curate having picked up some scraps of your sermons, came galloping over to me to know what they could do to you, and what do you think my advice was? Said I, let him alone: for if you bring him to a trial, he will appeal to the Articles and Homilies, and since they are as they are, you can do nothing to him; so let him alone."

It appears that the excellent advice of the good Archbishop

did not altogether check the spirit of opposition. The curate reported to the Bishop that his rector was preaching heresy. His lordship informed Mr. Shirley, and a day was appointed for the investigation, when both rector and curate were present. Mr. Shirley requested the Bishop to ask his accuser the nature of heresy. After much hesitation the curate answered, that heresy is heresy, upon which the Bishop reproved him sharply, and directed him to return home and study his principles better than it appeared he had done.

Having thus failed with the Bishop, the curate tried the Archbishop again, and kept perpetually communicating pieces of intelligence, which, he thought, might be pleasing to his Grace; but the Archbishop at once saw the motives of this gossip, whom he determined to reward as soon as fit opportunity offered. "Oh, your Grace," said the weak-minded cleric, "I have such a circumstance to communicate, one that will astonish you." "Indeed," replied the Archbishop, "what can it be?" "Why, my lord," rejoined the curate with a solemn air, "Mr. Shirley actually wears white stockings." "Very anti-clerical, and very dreadful indeed," responded the waggish prelate; and then, with peculiar earnestness in his manner, and in a sort of confidential half-whisper, enquired, "Does Mr. Shirley wear them over his boots?" "No, your Grace." "Well, sir," added the Archbishop, "the first time you find him with his stockings over his boots, pray inform me, and I shall deal with him accordingly."

On August 21st Mr. Shirley wrote to Mr. Wesley as follows:—"Your obliging and truly Christian letter was welcome to my soul, ten thousand, thousand times, and brought along with it a warm satisfaction, which could only be exceeded by the pleasure of a personal conversation with you. And I am not without hopes, that when you shall think fit to visit these blessed seminaries of true vital religion in this kingdom, of your own planting, you will take an opportunity of honouring this place, and more particularly my house, with the presence of one, whose labours in the Gospel of my dear Master are so eminent. I thank you greatly for your alarm; indeed the devil could not make use of a more subtle and specious insinuation to dissuade us from pursuing the attack with vigour than that of Christian

prudence. I trust he sees himself baffled through your timely caution. But, alas! what confidence is there to be put in the weakness of man! It is in the Lord's strength alone that I shall be able to triumph over this, and all other temptations. What will you say, dear sir? Will you not give up every favourable opinion of so unworthy a minister as I am, when I inform you, that though there are many under my charge, who confess they have been awakened, yet I dare not boast of any confirmed converts, now living, through my preaching and ministry? I bless my God, however, for one dear soul, who departed in peace. Let me entreat your earnest prayers to the God of all grace, through Jesus Christ our Lord, that I may not be found an unprofitable servant."

While in some quarters the preachers had to endure numerous privations and even persecution, there was one part of the country in which they were kindly received by the rich and noble. In 1750, Lady Elizabeth Hastings, daughter of the Countess of Huntingdon, had married Lord Rawdon, son and heir of the Earl of Moira, and both she and her husband resided at Moira, and were friendly to Methodism; although, she, it seems, was not then fully decided for Christ. In October, Thomas Seccomb, who is called by Duncan Wright, "that serious man," having held the quarterly meeting at Lisburn, with a heavy fever on him, set off on the next morning for Dublin, but became so much worse as to be unable to proceed further than Moira. Here Lord Rawdon showed him every attention, and secured for him the services of the best physician that could be got; but human skill could not arrest the progress of the disease. For some days his mind wandered, but during the last two hours of life reason regained its ascendancy. He repeated a text, and preached a sermon, lay quiet for a few moments, then said, "Christ is the Author and Finisher of my faith," and calmly fell asleep in Jesus.

On September 1st Mr. Johnson arrived at Cork, having been on the Limerick circuit during the previous three months, where, he says, he laboured with little fruit to his work. Here he continued during the remainder of the year, labouring with all his might, and also seeing very little apparent success, owing to a spirit of contention which unfortunately had arisen amongst the people.

Chapter XXX.

1760-1.

EARLY in 1760 the Hon. and Rev. W. Shirley returned to Loughrea from England, where he had been on account of his health, and visited *en route* Dublin, Athlone, and Aughrim, labouring among the Methodists. At Athlone he heard serious complaints of coldness and indifference to the things of God, which he traced to certain members of the Society, having not only refrained from attending church, but also influenced others. The grounds assigned by them for so doing were that the recently appointed minister was not a child of God, and did not preach sound doctrine. These reasons Mr. Shirley thought insufficient, and therefore he wrote an alarm to Mr. Wesley, stating in full his impressions and views, and adding, "I have hitherto learnt to consider the Methodists, not as any sect, but as the purer part of the Church of England; but if any of them grow so wantonly fond of division as to form a schism, I foresee they will lose much of the gospel meekness, humility, and love: and party zeal will take place, instead of a zeal according to knowledge."

On January 24th Mr. Johnson returned to Dublin, where he was much more warmly received than on his first visit. The people, he says, manifested a very teachable Christian spirit, so that the power of God attended the ordinances. His work began to revive, and a spirit of life and love prevailed.

On February 21st the following remarkable and well-authenticated incident occurred at Cootehill. John Smith had been engaged at prayer in a barn, from which he quickly returned home, greatly agitated, saying to his wife as he entered: "Mary, the French have just landed in the north." This was repeated, and soon spread over the town, giving rise to considerable talk. One of the local authorities having heard the report, sent for the "seer," and reprimanded him for disturbing the public tranquillity by exciting a needless alarm. He

was asked how he could know that such an event had taken place, the town being distant from any northern port. John Smith replied that he was sure his statement was correct, and he was willing to remain in custody till the fact should be ascertained. A few hours after this interview intelligence arrived that the French Admiral, Thurot, had landed at Carrickfergus a body of soldiers, commanded by General Cavignac, who had taken possession of the town. This time, when the terror of invasion filled the minds of the people, was regarded by John Smith as a favourable opportunity for calling them to flee to Christ for refuge; he hastened from house to house, warning the inmates of the danger of eternal death. No doubt the feeling excited by the confirmation of his singular statement with regard to the French landing greatly added to his influence. So deep and general was the impression made by his labours, that when Mr. Wesley paid his second visit to Cootehill (May 13th), and preached in the Market-house, nearly all the Protestants in the town were present. More important good, however, than a mere interest in religious services resulted from the fervent efforts of John Smith; great numbers were converted to God. Encouraged by these successes, he continued for some years earnestly and faithfully to work for Christ in his own neighbourhood. Some who then professed to receive spiritual good filled important and useful positions in the Church. Thirty years after John Smith had passed home, some of the most devoted members of the Society in Cootehill referred to him as the instrument of their conversion.

When intelligence of the landing of the French at Carrickfergus reached Larne, it was reported there that they were marching to the town; and as the rumour was believed, it produced great consternation. The wife of the curate, the Rev. Henry Smith, had been a violent opponent of the Methodists; but it pleased the Lord now to impress her mind so deeply with the conviction that they were His people, that she hastened to the house where they were assembled, and earnestly entreated an interest in their prayers. She was thus led to become a member of the Society, and give her heart to God, and continued steadfast until her death, which was most triumphant.

A few weeks after the above, a group of emigrants might have been seen at the Custom-house quay, Limerick, preparing to sail for America. They were accompanied to the vessel's side by crowds of their companions and friends, some of whom came sixteen miles to say "farewell." One of those about to leave was Mrs. Heck, another was Philip Embury, the leader of the party. He was surrounded by his spiritual children and friends, who were anxious to have some parting words of counsel and instruction. Setting foot on the vessel, he from its side once more broke the bread of life. And now the last prayer was offered; the vessel began to move, and as it receded, uplifted hands and hearts attested the depth of feeling both of the emigrants and of their friends. Who, among the crowd that saw this little band leave, could have thought that two of their number were destined, in the providence of God, to influence for good countless myriads, and that their names should be handed down as a grateful memorial to succeeding generations? Yet so it was. That vessel contained the germ from which has sprung the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States of America; a Church which has now, more or less under its influence, about fourteen millions of people. "There shall be a handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth."

But to return to Ireland. On the following April 1st, Wesley landed at Dublin, and says he never saw more serious congregations in this country than they had all the succeeding week. On Easter Sunday he introduced the English custom of beginning religious services at four o'clock in the morning. He also preached twice in the barrack square, and when that was unsuitable, owing to the inclemency of the weather, the riding house was placed at his disposal. The Society was much alive to God, and larger than it had been for several years, consisting of more than five hundred members.

On the 21st Wesley left for Rosmead. At Newry he preached to a numerous congregation, and was soon afterwards followed here by Messrs. Johnson and Penington, whose labours on the round were greatly acknowledged. Under the

first sermon Mr. Johnson preached at Clonmain, two were awakened to a sense of their state, and found the peace of God. Great numbers from that time forward attended the ministry of the Word, and at each meeting some were brought to a saving knowledge of God, through Christ Jesus.

On April 26 Wesley wrote to Mr. Blackwell from Newry : "Hitherto I have had an extremely prosperous journey, and all the fields are white to the harvest ; but that the labourers are few is not the only hindrance to the gathering it in effectually. Of those few some are careless, some heavy and dull, scarce one of the spirit of Thomas Walsh. The nearest to it is Mr. Morgan, but his body, too, sinks under him, and probably will not last long."

At Rathfryland the Presbyterian minister had written to the Popish priest "to keep his people from hearing," but they would not be kept. Protestants and Catholics flocked together to the meadow where the evangelist preached, and gave their utmost attention, while he exhorted them to "Repent and believe the Gospel." The same attention appeared in the whole congregation at Terryhoogan, in the evening, where he spent a comfortable night in the prophet's chamber, already described. At Moira, the rector having refused the request of the Earl to allow Mr. Wesley to preach in the church, his lordship sent the bellman through the town to summon the people to the service, and the devoted itinerant having taken his stand on a tombstone, called a considerable number of people to "know God and Jesus Christ, whom He hath sent." But it does not appear that a society was formed in the town for a number of years subsequently.

At Lisburn the people were "all ear." At Comber Wesley began as soon as service in the church was ended, and four in five of the audience behaved well. At Newtownards he had, as usual, the largest Methodist congregation in Ulster. At Belfast he preached in the Market place to a people who cared for none of these things. At Carrickfergus he accepted an invitation from Mr. Cobham, a merchant in the town, to stop at his house, where he had the opportunity of meeting Lieutenant-General Cavignac. Leaving Carrickfergus, he proceeded to Larne, where he had a large as well as a serious congrega-

tion, to whom he spoke with the utmost plainness, but could not find the way to their hearts. At Garvagh he preached in the house of Mr. Burrowes, to a well-behaved audience of Churchmen, Romanists, Presbyterians, and Cameronians ; and on Sunday he had a larger number of hearers in the church than had been there before. At Ballymena he had a large concourse of people in the market-house, who manifested such a spirit as he had not observed in any other congregation since leaving Dublin. At Belturbet there was neither Romanist nor Presbyterian, "but there were abundance of Sabbath-breakers, drunkards, and common swearers."

At Sligo the visits of the preachers had proved so successful that when Mr. Wesley came to the town he found the congregations so large and respectable, and such a spirit of earnestness amongst them, that he recommended some suitable place should be secured in which to hold the services. Accordingly a large and commodious apartment was procured in a feudal castle, which once belonged to the royal family of O'Connor, and with which tradition has connected a terrible massacre. It stood near the site at present occupied by the handsome Town-hall. In a few weeks Mr. Wesley returned again to follow up the good work. His highest hopes were more than realized, as the people received him with the greatest respect and affection. The congregations continued very large, and a gracious influence accompanied the preaching of the Word. Even one of the neighbouring clergy threw himself heartily into the work, and was most wishful that Mr. Wesley should prolong his stay. Amongst those who at this period identified themselves with Methodism, were Mr. John Anderson, of Willowbrook, some of whose descendants of the fourth and fifth generation are now connected with the Church of their fathers ; and Mr. Knox, of whom more hereafter.

At Newport, Wesley says, "all the Protestants of the town were present, and many Romanists, notwithstanding the prohibitions and bitter curses of their priests." At Castlebar on Sunday he assisted the Rev. Mr. Ellison at the Lord's supper ; and on the following Tuesday, all the gentlemen of the surrounding country having assembled to hear a trial, as Wesley preached in the Court-house, they met an hour sooner

and heard his sermon first. Here a chapel was built during this year. At Aughrim he "found a people alive to God;" and doubtless would have gone on to Loughrea, but for the absence of Mr. Shirley, who was then in England, in connection with the trial and execution of his unfortunate brother, and who earnestly desired to give Wesley a welcome to his parish. It was an agreeable surprise to find at Athlone that the bitterness against the Church had entirely subsided. At Ahascragh the majority of the congregation were Romanists, yet "the decency of their behaviour was such as might have made Protestants ashamed." At Longford, amongst the hearers was Dr. Hort, the rector of the parish, "a learned, sensible and pious man, and a pattern both for clergy and laity." At Drummersnave, almost the whole town, Protestants and Romanists, were present at the evening service, and a great part of them in the morning also.

Wesley, on reaching Carrick-on-Shannon, had no sooner begun to preach than a magistrate came, followed by a mob with a drum, to silence him. While the justice of the peace harangued the roughs in the street, Wesley quietly removed the congregation to the garden behind the house. The magistrate, being armed with a halbert and sword, then attacked William Ley, who stood at the door, and striking him, broke the halbert on his wrist. Having thus effected an entrance, he made his way through the house to the back-door, but found it held so fast on the other side by J. Glassbrook, that egress was impossible. Not to be foiled, the magistrate and his minions then ran round the house, scaled the garden wall, and with a volley of oaths and curses, shouted "You shall not preach here to-day." "Sir," said Wesley, with provoking coolness, "I do not intend it, for I have preached already." The man now foamed more furiously than ever, belaboured poor Mr. Glassbrook with the truncheon of his halbert till it snapped asunder, and then vented his vengeance on Wesley's hat, which "he beat and kicked most valiantly; but a gentleman rescued it out of his hands," and the evangelist rode quietly out of the town.

Wesley now made his way to Tyrrell's pass where "a heap of fine, gay, people came in their post-chaises to the evening preaching." He spoke very plainly, but his words seemed to

fly over them. At Edenderry he preached to such a congregation as he had not seen there for many years, and God gave power to His word. At Portarlinton he preached at four o'clock in the morning, and again at ten, "for the sake of the gentry; but it was too early, they could not rise so soon."

At Mountmellick he exhorted a large congregation to walk in the old paths; many Romanists appeared quite astonished, and some of them were almost persuaded to walk therein. At Tullamore, where a chapel was built this year, the audience was nearly as large as at Mountmellick. At Coolalough he preached to a congregation assembled from twenty miles round, and held the quarterly meeting, the stewards—"a company of settled, sensible men"—being present. "In this kingdom," he says, "nothing is wanting, but a few more zealous and active labourers. James Morgan, John Johnson, and two or three more do their best: the rest spare themselves."

Preaching daily, and riding long journeys over rough roads in bad weather, and with all kinds of horses, Wesley came to Eyrecourt, "where many threatened great things, but all vanished into air," so he preached in the Courthouse. Colonel Eyre, who eight years subsequently was elevated to the peerage as Baron Eyre, was present, and several other persons of influence. At Birr, Wesley preached with more satisfaction than he had done here for several years, "finding many more alive to God, and provoking one another to love and good works." On July 4th he came to Limerick, where on the day following the Conference met, ten preachers being present. They "were all of one mind, particularly with regard to the Church." Even J. Deaves had not the least thought of leaving it, but attended the services whether the minister was good or bad. From the numerical returns it appears that there were in Connaught a little more than two hundred members; in Ulster, two hundred and fifty; in Leinster, one thousand; and in Munster, six hundred—in all two thousand and fifty. In Limerick itself, however, there had been a considerable decrease, through a lack of life, zeal and activity. In hope of quickening the members here, Wesley preached in the old camp to more than twice the usual congregation, which on the two following evenings was more numerous still and equally

attentive, including "a little army of soldiers, and not a few of their officers." Thousands assembled at the concluding service, filling all the lower ground, and completely covering the surrounding banks.

Wesley then proceeded to the settlements of the Palatines, at Killeheen, Ballingarrane, and Courtmatrix, "three such towns, he says, "as are scarcely to be equalled in England or Ireland;" for there was "no cursing or swearing, no Sabbath-breaking, no drunkenness, no alehouse in any of them." But what a sad change had taken place within two years! Philip Embury, the beloved and faithful preacher, Paul Heck and his noble wife, and many families, the hope of the infant churches here, were all gone; and as Wesley thought of this loneliness and desolation and its cause, it is no wonder he waxed indignant and wrote, "The poor settlers, with all their diligence and frugality, under their merciful landlords, could not procure even the coarsest food to eat, and the meanest raiment to put on, so that most of them at Newmarket, as well as Ballingarrane, had been forced to seek bread in other places, some in other parts of Ireland, but the greater part in America." Could Wesley have anticipated the glorious results of this migration, how it would have cheered his heart, and what a bright star it would have been in the dark night that then spread over the desolate homes of the Irish Palatines!

At the camp near Caher, the devoted evangelist addressed a large and serious congregation of soldiers. At Clonmel, he preached near the barracks "to a wild-staring people, but quiet perforce, for the soldiers kept them in awe;" and, on returning in four weeks he had "abundantly more than the usual congregation, as it was the week of the Assizes." In Waterford, up to the previous year, rooms had been hired in different parts of the city for holding meetings; but the growth of the Society had rendered it necessary that a suitable building should be erected for public worship; so the first preaching-house was built in Factory lane. Mr. Wesley refers to this building as "a commodious place, enclosed on all sides." Here he preached three evenings in succession, with great hope of permanent results; and the large room, he says, was full every morning. At Cork he preached in the chapel on the Marsh, which was well filled;

but says he expected little increase till open-air preaching was more frequently adopted. On examining the Society he was grieved, though not surprised, to find a declension ; having left two hundred and ninety members on his previous visit, he now found two hundred and thirty-three. At Bandon he preached as usual in the Main street to a large and attentive congregation, which was nearly doubled on the following evening. Saturday being market day, the service was held in the recently erected chapel, "a very neat and lightsome building." At Kinsale the congregation consisted of a number of soldiers, and not a few of the townsfolk. The following being field day, the soldiers could not attend, but the audience was large notwithstanding. "Surely," he says, "good might be done here, would our preachers always preach in the Exchange, as they might without any molestation, instead of a little, ugly, dirty garret."

After a tour of seventeen weeks Wesley got back to Dublin. He had preached scores of sermons, travelled many hundreds of miles, being subject to great privations, and sometimes to serious danger ; but in the midst of all the Lord was with him, and he was happy and prosperous in His glorious work. On July 24th he embarked for Chester. He was followed by a letter from Dr. William Barnard, Bishop of Derry, who, being impressed with the zeal and fidelity of Mr. Wesley, in his indefatigable labours to promote religion, was led to entertain a high respect and regard for him, and being disappointed at not seeing him when in Dublin, wrote :—"It would have given me a very sincere pleasure to have seen you during your stay in Dublin ; and I am concerned to find that your having any doubt of it, deprived me of that satisfaction. Indeed I did not expect your stay would have been so short. Whether your expression of our meeting no more on this side of eternity, refers to your design of quitting your visits to Ireland, or to any increase of bodily weakness, I do not read it without tender regret ; however, that must be submitted to the disposal of Providence. I pray God to bless you, and supply every want, and sanctify every suffering."

The English Conference met at Bristol on August the 29th. The love and unanimity of the preachers were such as soon

made Wesley forget all his anxieties. The following were appointed to labour in Ireland :—Messrs. J. Johnson, Thompson, Coughlan, Haughton, Kead, Tobias, Penington, and Hudson. Thomas Tobias, who entered the itinerancy in 1750, was a native of Wales. He was a man of cheerful spirit, of deep piety, and great zeal for the glory of God.

On September 14, Messrs. Thompson, Coughlan and Tobias, took ship at Liverpool, and early next morning were in sight of Dublin, where they met with contrary winds which drove them back to Holyhead. They got on shore, met for prayer, and on the following day again weighed anchor and put to sea. There was a fair wind at first, but at length a terrible storm arose, the sea rolled over the deck, sometimes half-mast high, and death seemed inevitable. Then they had recourse to prayer, in which all on board were willing to join. Even some who had made a mock of it previously, now cried : “ For God’s sake let us come amongst you, and do pray for us.” Meanwhile the sailors were compelled to quit the deck, and let the ship go as it listed. If they escaped death, the captain expected they would land in the north of Ireland ; but early on the next morning they found themselves to their surprise rolling into Dublin bay. The captain was constrained to acknowledge that the Lord had preserved them, and brought them “ to their desired haven.” The preachers then addressed to their fellow passengers an earnest exhortation to repentance, which they gratefully received, bidding them good speed in the name of the Lord. It was probably at this time Mr. Coughlan went to Waterford, where his labours were greatly blessed.

D. Wright was quartered at Galway, where Methodism then had not obtained a footing ; but he soon set to work for Christ, and had seals to his ministry, in the conviction and conversion of several, thus leading to the formation of a Society in the city.

Mr. Shirley made some excursions through the country, which, he says, were more blessed than his labours in his own parish. At Moira he preached three times, and found the people “ ready enough to acknowledge the truth, but very backward in embracing it.” And at Killashee where the Rev. Fletcher Piers, A.M., was rector, one young woman was led to decision.

During the last quarter of the year, Mr. Johnson laboured on the Limerick circuit, but not with that success which his soul desired ; some good however was done. In February, 1761, he returned from Limerick to Dublin, where he continued for about three months. He says, the Lord stood by him, and gave him favour in the eyes of the people, making His doctrine distil as the dew, so that during one fortnight not less than fifteen received remission of sins.

The labours of Mr. Haughton in the metropolis, as well as other parts of Ireland, were also eminently owned of the Lord. Mr. Shirley and he preached morning and evening for a succession of Sundays to very crowded and attentive congregations, the deep interest attending their ministrations, and the multitudes who were present at them, soon awakened the enmity of those who hated the light. Mr. Shirley insisted chiefly on the great and important doctrine of a sinner's justification by faith, which he treated in a way so decisive and evangelical as to excite the wrath of his superiors in the Church. Mr. Haughton was led to resign his position in the Methodist itinerancy, and received episcopal ordination. He occasionally visited Dublin subsequently, and having obtained admission to some of the churches, proclaimed the Gospel of the grace of God with great boldness and fidelity.

Messrs. Thompson and Coughlan were also eminently useful, the great Head of the Church bore testimony to the word of His servants, and wherever they preached, " signs and wonders were wrought in the name of the Holy Jesus." Their labours were intense, and they had frequently to contend with " outcasts of men." But they cheerfully sacrificed ease, honour, and worldly gain ; and with the apostle counted not their lives dear unto them, so that they might finish their course with joy, and the ministry which they had received of the Lord Jesus. At one time while Mr. Thompson was preaching an unruly mob arose, instigated by a magistrate—the rector of the parish—and cruelly assaulted him and several of his hearers, whom they carried off with triumph and placed on board a transport, which then lay ready to sail with a fleet of men-of-war. Mr. Thompson was confined in prison, expecting to be transported, and not permitted to see any of his

friends. The parson, however, sometimes deigned to visit him in order to dispute with him on religious subjects. This outrage committed against all law and order, having come to the ears of the Countess of Huntingdon, her ladyship, with others of considerable influence, made application to the Government, by means of which Mr. Thompson and the people were soon set at liberty. An action was brought against the worthy clergyman, who had nearly paid dear for his zeal: for had not Mr. Thompson himself used his utmost endeavours to stay the process, it would probably have proved the ruin of him and his family.

Reference has been made to Margaret Davidson, the poor blind girl who heard Mr. Oddie preach. She returned home from the service with an increasing desire to become identified with the Methodists, and was more bitterly persecuted than ever by her relatives. Her happiest moments were at night, when, unseen and unheard, in some retired place, she could lift up her heart and voice in prayer and praise. At length she resolved to make her way to Comber, the nearest town where a Society then existed. Twice she attempted the journey, and failed each time. Then her parents having given their reluctant consent, the day of deliverance arrived. At Comber she was kindly received by both the preacher, Mr. Hudson, and the people; and much enjoyed the services, which proved to be "wells of salvation" to her soul.

At this time some members of the Society in this town died, all of whom witnessed a good confession. One of these had been cruelly maltreated by her wicked husband. After her death, he said, she often prayed for him while he was cursing and abusing her. During her illness she expressed herself thus—"I know my body is dying, yet I have scarce any pain. My soul is enraptured with views of Christ and of heaven. O, precious Jesus! precious Jesus! I rejoice that I shall soon be with Thee, wrapt in Thine everlasting embrace." Even the clergyman who visited her, although a stranger to "the joy of the Lord," was constrained to testify to her blessed triumph over death. Another had been a leader for some time, and had lived for seven years in the service of God. When the Presbyterian minister, who had expelled the Methodists from the

Lord's table, visited him, and said, "Most people imagine that the best Christians are afraid to die, but what say you?" he answered, "Blessed be my Redeemer, ever since His love was shed abroad in my heart, I have been saved from every fear that has torment. I can now say, through Christ strengthening me, 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? the sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, which giveth me the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.'"

The English Conference met in London, September 1 to 5. Mr. Wesley says of it, "Our Conference ended, as it began, in peace and love. All found it a blessed time." John Manners writes, "We have had the most satisfactory and solemn Conference that has been held for several years. It was honoured by the presence of Mr. Whitefield and other clergy several times." Hitherto three months appear to have been the longest period which a preacher continued on a circuit; but after this Conference it is worthy of notice, there was an extension of time to six months. The following preachers it may be assumed were appointed to Ireland, as they were at work in the country during the course of the year. Messrs. Swindells, Lee, Kead, Davis, Deaves, and Manners, of whom we have heard before, and Messrs. Harris, Roberts, Roe, and Guilford, whose names now for the first time appear in connection with Irish Methodism. Wm. Harris entered the itinerancy in 1753, and retired in 1769. Robert Roberts, a native of Upton, near Chester, received his first religious impressions through a conversation with Mr. Brisco, became a Methodist preacher in 1759, and for more than forty years continued a faithful, zealous, and laborious worker in the Lord's vineyard. He was a man of respectability and integrity, sound in judgment, and unblameable in conversation. George Roe began to travel in 1760, and ceased in 1766. Joseph Guilford had been in the army several years, and was awakened to a sense of his spiritual state under a sermon preached by Mr. Olivers in the Foundry, in 1756. After his conversion, he was remarkable for his Christian heroism; he was bold as a lion, for he feared no man when the cause of God and truth was concerned. While he was in the army the Duke of

Cumberland, who was Commander-in-Chief, was desired by some of the enemies of religion to put a stop to the meetings of the praying soldiers. One day as the Duke passed where a number of them had met for worship, Guilford being then engaged in prayer, and earnestly entreating God on behalf of the King and all the Royal Family, his Grace listened with attention, seemed much affected, and said to those who were with him, "I would to God that all the soldiers in the British army were like these men." Mr. Guilford, who at this Conference was received into the itinerancy, was in his preaching a son of thunder: his sermons were generally very powerful, and his zeal and fervour of spirit remarkable.

There were several who at this time became members of the Society, and rendered most valuable service to the cause of God. One of these was Mr. John M'Gregor, a native of Scotland, who after having been engaged in the battle of Fontenoy, and the siege of Bergin op. Zoom, with the 42nd Highlanders, married and settled in Limerick, where he was for many years a most active and successful leader.

Another of these devoted Christian workers was George Howe, at this time a youth of seventeen. When a little boy, having heard one of the Methodist preachers, he was deeply affected, and resolved, when practicable, he would become a Methodist. Some time after, by the removal of his father's family to Cork, the Lord opened his way, he joined the Society, and continued his connection with it during a long life. His visits to prisoners were crowned with great success, several being brought to repentance, including some condemned to death, who departed in full hope of eternal life. He was also specially owned in ministering to the sick; three infidels being amongst the many who were thus brought to God. He possessed a more than ordinary degree of cheerfulness, and his phraseology, which was peculiar, arrested attention.

In general the work of God seemed to prosper much, although very few details are now available. Mr. Wesley observes—"Every day afforded us fresh instances of persons convinced of sin or converted to God. So that it seems God was pleased to pour out His Spirit this year on every part both of England and Ireland: perhaps in a manner we had never seen before:

certainly, not for twenty years. O, what pity that so many, even of the children of God, did not know the day of their visitation !”

Chapter XXX.

1762.

EARLY in 1762, the subject of entire sanctification, as an instantaneous blessing obtained by faith, began to agitate Methodism throughout the country. This was an important, and in some respects, a novel movement. Wesley had held the doctrine of Christian perfection ever since the year 1733, when he preached his sermon on the Circumcision of the Heart, but now he found several who professed to have attained to this state of grace, especially at Otley. “Here,” he says, “began that glorious work of sanctification which had been nearly at a stand for twenty years. But from time to time it spread, first through various parts of Yorkshire, afterwards in London, then through most parts of England; next through Dublin, Limerick, and all the south and west of Ireland. And wherever the work of sanctification increased, the whole work of God increased in all its branches.”

No little light is thrown on this blessed work so far at least as Dublin is concerned, by the unpublished diary of Mr. Thomas Garrett, which is still in existence, and from which most of the following particulars are extracted. At the beginning of the year Mr. Davis was stationed in the metropolis, where his ministrations were greatly enjoyed. On January 11th he preached his farewell sermon, which was very powerful and full of tenderness and love. The Society felt that God had removed from them “a choice servant, wonderfully endowed with uncommon talent, which he used with unwearied application for his Master’s glory, and their spiritual advantage.” The reviving of children’s meeting was regarded as a “lasting monument of his judgment and love for souls.” Thus the people were prepared for what followed. Mr. Davis was suc-

ceeded by Mr. Manners, who at once commenced a series of discourses on the Epistle of James, at the early morning services, thus enforcing practical godliness: while each evening his sermon appears to have been what could now be called an evangelistic address. The language and delivery of the preacher were peculiar, and drew "a vast multitude of people" to the services. Soon there were tokens of religious quickening. "Most of the Society realized a revival of the presence and power of God under him, whose learning seemed to be entirely divine." On Sunday, February 21st, a love-feast was held, which was attended by a larger number than any similar service previously, and which proved a time of special blessing. Several distinct testimonies were borne as to the enjoyment of the higher blessing, including one by a young man, named Thomas Rourke, who had evidently been a Roman Catholic, but was now actively engaged in work for Christ. Subsequent services also proved increasingly rich in the saving and sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit.

On Sunday, April 4th, Mr. Wesley unexpectedly arrived in Dublin, and at once commenced a series of discourses on the nature, extent, and means of salvation. He says, he found much liberty of speech in the evening, while he enforced "Now is the day of salvation." The congregation was uncommonly large next morning, his text was "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." On Good Friday he held a watch-night service, at which he was assisted by Messrs. Swindells, Kead and Lee. On Easter Sunday, a stranger preached at five o'clock, and Wesley at eight. Most of the Society met at St. Patrick's, to receive the Lord's supper. "We had," says Mr. Wesley, "uncommon congregations, as indeed we have had all the week. And I observed a more staid and solid behaviour in most than is usual in this kingdom." Mr. Garrett adds, "Mr. Wesley having approved of a plan which I sent him, he read it to the Society, after the people who did not belong to us were gone. It was an easy method by which the contingent expenses of the preaching and the house might be defrayed, and arrears paid off, without any real inconvenience to anyone." After having preached at five o'clock on Monday morning, Mr. Wesley began the examina-

tion of the Society, and called on Mr. Garrett first, and then each member of his class, to tell how their souls stood with God. With regard to this service, Wesley says, "I was much comforted among them: there was such a hunger and thirst in all who had tasted of the grace of God, after a full renewal in His image." That evening, instead of preaching, he spent two hours reading letters, which he had received from members of the Society in England, who professed to enjoy purity of heart.

On Sunday, 18th, Mr. Manners preached at five o'clock, and Mr. Wesley at eight, when for the first time he saw the chapel "thoroughly filled." At the evening service care was taken that no one should be present but members of the Society. Mr. Wesley gave suitable Christian counsel, appointed Mr. Garrett and two other brethren to act as stewards, and then administered the Lord's supper. On the following morning, at half-past four o'clock, Messrs. Wesley, Swindells, Manners, Kead and Lee, with Brothers Martin and Ball, breakfasted with Mr. Garrett, and after thanksgiving and prayer, separated, Mr. Manners to conduct the usual morning service, and Mr. Wesley, with Messrs. Kead and Lee, to make his usual tour through the provinces. As to his visit to the metropolis, Wesley says, he could look back with satisfaction to the days he had spent there, having reason to believe that God had been at work in a very uncommon manner. Many of those who once contradicted and blasphemed were convinced of the truth as it is in Jesus. Many who had long revolted from God, had returned to Him with full purpose of heart. Several mourners had found peace with God, and some believed He had saved them from all sin. Many more were all on fire for this salvation: and a spirit of love ran through the whole people.

In the provinces, at Newry, offences had broken the Society to pieces, only two and thirty members being left of nearly a hundred. At Carrickfergus the violent rain kept away the delicate and curious hearers, for the sake of whom the morning service was delayed until a quarter before nine; but it was too early for them, as they could not possibly rise before ten. At Belfast Wesley preached in the lower part of

the Market-house to a very serious and attentive audience ; but they were all poor ; the rich of the town “ cared for none of these things.” At Newtownards the poor, shattered Society was reduced from fifty to eighteen, and most of these cold enough, yet he preached to a large congregation in the Market-house, many were healed, and many more deeply wounded, so that he left between thirty and forty earnest and promising members, full of desire and hope and fervent resolutions, not to be almost but altogether Christians. At Lisburn there were many “ rich and genteel ” hearers, and the congregations continued to increase. At Lurgan there was a large audience. At Richhill he says he had rarely seen so serious a congregation in a new place. A young lady, who then lived at Wheatfield, in the neighbourhood, and afterwards became Mrs. Whitestone of Dublin, says, the news of Mr. Wesley’s visit spread abroad, and so many flocked to hear, that he, seeing this, appointed two of his preachers to visit the town alternately, once a fortnight, which led to the introduction of Methodism. She was not present at this service, but went to another then announced for a few evenings subsequently, when the preacher was an old man, a Mr. Hervey, probably a local preacher. When she went again Mr. Roe preached, whom she describes as mighty in the Scriptures, and under his sermon she was awakened to a sense of her sinful state, and soon after the Lord revealed Himself to her in pardoning mercy.

At Clonmain Wesley preached in a new preaching-house, the largest then in the North of Ireland, which was erected chiefly through the influence of Mr. Ryan, whose labours had been greatly blessed in awakening the people of the neighbourhood. Here also the founder of Methodism held a lovefeast, which proved a wonderful time. The Lord poured out His Holy Spirit abundantly. Many were filled with consolation, particularly two, who had come from Lisburn, about twenty-nine miles to be present.

On April 29th Mr. Wesley arrived at Monaghan, and was nearly arrested as a person of questionable designs. A short time previously the first rising of the Whiteboys had taken place in the province of Munster, and alarmed the whole country ; so Mr. Wesley and two of his itinerants had scarcely

dismounted when some busy folk informed the Provost that three strange men had come to *The King's Arms*. The Provost and his officers proceeded without delay to secure their town from danger. Mr. Wesley was prevented from leaving the house, was closely questioned as to his doings and intentions, and would have suffered at least serious inconvenience from the meddling officials, but for two letters he had recently received, one from the Bishop of Derry, and the other from the Earl of Moira. Upon reading these the Provost apologised for the trouble he had given, and wished the good man a prosperous journey.

Having preached at Cootehill in the evening, next morning Wesley and his companions rode through Enniskillen to a lone house that lay in the midst of horrid mountains at Carrickbeg, in the parish of Boho, where, however, they obtained corn for their horses, and potatoes for themselves. So having made a hearty supper, they called in as many as pleased of the family to prayers, and then lay down and slept in peace. Early next day they left for Sligo, where they found that the bright prospects presented two years previously were completely blighted. Wesley writes, "None in Sligo, when I was there last, professed so much love to me as Mr. Knox's family; they would willingly have had me with them, morning, noon and night, and omitted no possible mark of affection. But what a change! Mrs. K. went into the country the day before I came; her brother and his wife set out for Dublin at the same time. He, himself, and the rest of his family saw me—that is, at church, because they could not help it,

'But wondered at the strange man's face,
As one they ne'er had known.'

Three years later Wesley wrote to his former friend an earnest, faithful, and affectionate letter, which appears in his published works; but it does not seem to have accomplished the end desired, as there is no evidence of Mr. Knox's return to Methodism. It is remarkable that not only is there no trace of the family in Sligo now, but there is not even a local tradition of their ever having lived there. While many of the townspeople withdrew from the Methodist services, their places were in some

measure supplied by the military ; both officers and men were present in large numbers, and “behaved with uncommon seriousness.” The market-house being pre-occupied by a party of strolling players, who had succeeded in ejecting the Presbyterians from it for the time being, and thus deprived them of their usual Sunday service, Mr. Wesley took possession of the open space underneath, which was used as a corn market, and as soon as he gave out a hymn, “the people quitted their sacks, and listened to business of greater importance.”

Leaving Sligo, Wesley went to Carrick-on-Shannon, where he was the guest of Mr. Glover Laird, whose descendants to the third and fourth generation are still heartily identified with Methodism. His daughter Mary, then a girl of sixteen, and subsequently married to Mr. Caleb Shera,* of Roscommon, was at this time made a joyful witness of the saving power of Divine grace, and with uniform and consistent piety adorned her profession for nearly seventy years.

Having preached at Drummersnave, Cleggill, Longford, and Abbeyderg, Wesley arrived at Athlone, where the congregations were large and he found fruit to his labours. It appears that a new priest had been appointed to the parish, who was stricter than any of his predecessors, and was esteemed a man of piety as well as learning. Accordingly he had given orders to his people not to work on the Lord's day ; but said they might play as much as they pleased, more especially at cards, which he averred it was their duty to do, in order to refresh both their bodies and minds !

At Ahascragh Wesley preached to all the Protestants in or near the town ; but the Romanists were not suffered by their priests to attend. At Ballinasloe he was the guest of Mr. John Knight, who then resided in the town, but subsequently lived at Cloonburren, Roscommon. He was truly devoted to God, and an example of simplicity, uprightness and zeal. He was also noted for his Christian benevolence and hospitality, Three years ago there was at least one person resident in Ballinasloe who could recall having seen him more than sixty years previously, when he was accustomed to ride into the ten

* Grandfather of H. Shera, Esq., LL.D., Sheffield.

o'clock service each Sunday morning, irrespective of weather, although then about ninety years of age.

Mr. Wesley then visited Aghrim and Hollymount. At Burriscarra, or Ballyhean, he preached in the church, and at Castlebar in the courthouse, when the chief family in the town—that of Sir Charles Bingham, afterwards Earl of Lucan—were members of the congregation. In Newport, at the close of the Church service, he had a conversation with Baron Monteagle, subsequently created Viscount Westport, whom he pronounces “an extremely sensible man,” with whom he would gladly have stayed longer, if he had not promised to return to Castlebar. At Galway he found a small Society, under the care of Duncan Wright, and preached in the courthouse to a mixed multitude of Romanists and Protestants, rich and poor, who appeared to be utterly astonished. At Ennis, many being ready to make a disturbance in the courthouse, he left them to themselves, and held the service elsewhere in great quietness.

Wesley arrived at Limerick on Saturday, May 29th, and on the following day preached in the old camp, to which the people flocked from all quarters. Many military officers, as well as a large number of the rank and file were present. One of these was John Dillon, a drum-major, who a few years previously, when in Cork, had entered into the glorious liberty of the children of God, and also became a member of the Society. Thenceforward his growth in grace was rapid and steady, so that he became remarkable for his deep devotion and fervent zeal. Wesley having selected for his text “Now is the day of salvation,” considered especially the subject of holiness of heart to which the attention of the Society had not recently been directed. Hence on visiting the classes he was surprised to find no witness of the great salvation; but on the following evening the sacred flame was kindled, a cry arose on every side, and many of the members seemed all on fire to be cleansed from all iniquity. Before Mr. Wesley left the city, he stated to the Society that if they would procure a suitable site for building a chapel, and send him word, he would return and spend four days with them. As therefore they succeeded in getting a piece of ground near the old courthouse, in all

respects suitable, he returned at the end of June, met the Society, and inquired what each one was willing to contribute. Thus a considerable sum was subscribed immediately. The following Sabbath was a day of solemn joy, more especially at the love-feast, when two at least gave a plain simple account of the manner in which God had cleansed their hearts from all sin. One of these was John Dillon, who had been led to seek this blessing during Mr. Wesley's previous visit.

On June 5th Wesley preached at noon in Ballingarrane, and in the evening and following morning at Newmarket, to large congregations, chiefly of Palatines, a steady industrious people. At Youghal a large number of people attended the evening service, and the greater part of them returned at five o'clock on the following morning. At Passage West he preached to the townspeople, and as many of the sailors as could attend. At Cork, on examining the classes, he found that in two years there was neither increase nor decrease in the number of members. On the 24th he rode to Kinsale, and preached to a considerable number of hearers. In the afternoon he went to Bandon, where he had remarkably large and deeply attentive audiences, but found the Society much lessened and dead enough. In visiting the classes he exhorted them to be zealous and repent, and his words sank into their hearts, so that they appeared to breathe quite a different spirit. Having preached in the chapel early on the following Sunday morning, he returned to Cork, and preached there in the afternoon on the barrack hill to such a congregation as he had not seen there for twelve years. One soldier made some noise, but the commanding officer soon ordered him into custody. On the two following days the congregations in the chapel were much larger than on any week day before, which, perhaps, in some measure was owing to an epidemic that raged in the city. "Honest Thomas Jones" fell a victim to it. He was one of the first in Cork who joined the Society, and suffered seriously during the riots of 1749-50, yet he never deserted the cause; but as he increased in riches became more generous, and fully employed his time in doing good.

At Clonmel Wesley preached near the barrack gate to a wild staring multitude, many of whom would have been rude

enough, but they stood in awe of the soldiers. At Waterford the services were conducted in a court adjoining the main street. During his three days' stay in the city several backsliders were reclaimed, many sinners were aroused from their lethargy, and some rejoiced in God their Saviour. At Kilkenny he was glad of permission to preach in the town-hall, where a small serious company attended; and on the following evening he preached in an old bowling-green, near the castle, where large numbers of both Protestants and Catholics assembled; and after he had concluded, the Romanists, not being strong enough to make a riot, gnashed upon him with their teeth, and one of their number bitterly cried, "Och! what is Kilkenny come to!" At Birr only about forty persons attended the evening service in the preaching room, and half that number on the following morning, so Wesley took the street, where he had hundreds of hearers, and many poor withered souls began to revive and rejoice again in the Lord. At Mountmellick there was a joyful love-feast. At "poor, dead Portarlington," where the itinerants had cooped themselves up in a room with twenty or thirty hearers, he went out to the market-place, and preached to a numerous congregation. Next morning, at five o'clock, there were more present than the room could have contained. Thus encouraged, in the evening he again took his stand in the open air. "Solemn attention sat on every face, and God repeated His call to many hearts." At Tullamore there was a terrible storm of thunder and lightning, most of the houses were shaken, yet no harm was done, but some good: for the preaching house was quite filled, and the inward voice of the Lord was mighty in operation. At Coolalough the quarterly meeting was held as usual; and having preached at Clara and at Tyrrell's Pass, Wesley went on to Edenderry. Here he found some who had been "toiling to work themselves into holiness;" but he showed them a more excellent way, and at the meeting of the Society, God confirmed the word of His grace in so powerful a manner that many wondered how they could help believing.

On July 24th Wesley returned to Dublin, and found that during his absence from the city the revival had not only continued but spread, and the congregations had increased con-

siderably. There had hardly been a day during which some one or more had not been justified or sanctified.

On Sunday, May 2nd, while Mr. Manners was at prayer with the Society, the power of the Lord so overshadowed them that one cried aloud, and then another, until the mighty influence was felt by all. Twice the preacher attempted to sing, but his voice could not be heard. He then desired those present to restrain the expression of their feelings, and in solemn silence to wait on the Lord, and the melting power of Divine grace was realized by many hearts. On May 6th three testified that the blood of Jesus Christ had cleansed them from all sin, one of whom said she had been justified seven years, and had been five years convinced of the necessity of entire sanctification; but this easy conviction availed not, until seized with a conviction so keen as gave her no rest till God had fully sanctified her, and witnessed it to her heart. Mrs. King also, a short time after her conversion had become deeply conscious of the remains of sin in her heart, and the consequent necessity of a further work of grace, in order to enter that rest which remains to the people of God. Her soul thirsted for this great salvation: she wrestled earnestly in prayer for the promised deliverance, and not in vain. On Sunday, May 9th, during the Society meeting, she received a baptism of the Holy Spirit in sanctifying power. The blessing then realized she appears never to have lost, nor even to have doubted the possession of. More than fifty-three years subsequently she wrote: "In 1762, the Lord, working faith in my soul, destroyed all propensity to sin, and took full possession of my longing heart; since which time I have never dared to say I found that inward propensity returning; but have been graciously preserved in a constant sense of my absolute weakness, and clinging to Christ as my all in all."

There were three places in the city at which as many as had opportunity assembled day and night to pour out their souls before God, for the continuance and enlargement of His work. As might be expected opposition soon arose from many quarters. Some said this work was rank enthusiasm; others that it was either a cheat or mere pride; and not a few, that it was a new thing of which they could find nothing in the

Bible. But the Lord prospered His work notwithstanding all opposition. On examination by Mr. Wesley, he found three or four-and-forty, who could say with the apostle John, "Herein is our love made perfect," while others who had received the same blessing had removed from the city, and about the same number had received remission of sins. This glorious revival also was happily free from the extravagance and fanaticism that accompanied and sadly marred the similar work in London.

The intelligence from the provinces was of a most encouraging kind. A member of the Society at Edenderry wrote to Mr. Wesley, "When you came hither, Satan had gained such an advantage over us that few even of the Society would read your sermons, saying, they were nothing but the law; but God has now taught us better. His power fell upon us first in the preaching, but abundantly more when the Society met. At that time, many who were in heaviness were filled with consolation, and two of the old believers were constrained to declare, they believed God had cleansed them from all sin."

From Limerick the news was still more cheering, one letter ran thus: "There is a glorious work going on in this city. Twelve or fourteen have a clear sense of being renewed. Several have been justified this week; and on Sunday night, at the meeting of the Society, there was such a cry as I scarcely ever heard before; such confession of sins, such pleading with the Lord, and such a spirit of prayer, as if the Lord Himself had been visibly present. Some received remission of sins, and several were just brought to the birth. All were in floods of tears. They trembled, they cried, they prayed, they roared aloud—all of them lying on the floor. I began to sing, yet they could not rise, and sang as they lay. When we concluded some could not go away, but stayed in the house all night. And, blessed be our Lord, they all hitherto walk worthy of their calling." Another writes: "The Lord has made your last visit to us a great blessing. Such times were never before in Limerick. The fire which broke out before you left us is now spreading on every side. Four were happy before you left us; several others can now rejoice evermore, and pray without ceasing. And this certainly they could not do did they not

love God with all their heart." A third letter, dated July 25, says: "Blessed be God, His word runs swiftly. Last night His power was present indeed; and another was assured that God, who had before forgiven his sins, had cleansed him from all unrighteousness. There are now ten women and thirteen men who witness the same confession, and their lives agree thereto. Eight have lately received remission of their sins, and many are on the full stretch for God, just ready to step into the pool." Thus, in proportion to the time, the work in Limerick appeared greater than even in Dublin itself.

Even the little Society in Galway was wonderfully blessed. D. Wright communicated to them from time to time the blessed intelligence of the progress of the good work he received, and the sacred fire soon kindled among them, too.

In the north, also, God raised up witnesses to the power of Christ to save to the uttermost. Margaret Davidson says, her attention was directed to the subject of entire sanctification, more especially by some who had experienced the blessing, and being fully satisfied that it was attainable, she was encouraged to "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." One Sabbath morning, when agonizing in prayer, God answered her by fire, and she found "such a deliverance from every chain of sin as she had never known before, and set out with redoubled strength and activity to run the Christian race," realizing a fulfilment of the assurance—"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee."

There is no record of a meeting of the Irish Conference this year, but the following entries in the diary of Mr. Garrett fix at once the time of meeting, and the preachers who were present: "July 28. Have had a good time of it since Mr. Wesley and the preachers came amongst us. 29th. Last night was a watch-night, when we had nine or ten preachers, the greatest number that I remember to have seen at one time—Messrs. J. Wesley, Manners, Kead, Swindells, Deaves, Davis, Roberts, Guilford, Lee, and Harris"—nearly, if not all, the preachers then in Ireland. Thomas Rourke was received into the itinerancy.

On July 31st Mr. Wesley, although he never before had

felt such a union of heart with the people of Dublin, yet believing his present work in the country was ended, commended it to God, and embarked for England. On August 10th he met the members of the English Conference at Leeds, when there were also present—Lady Huntingdon and the Revs. C. Wesley, Whitefield, Romaine, Madan and Venn. Wesley says—"We had great reason to praise God for His gracious presence from the beginning to the end." From the notices of those at work in Ireland during the succeeding year, it may be assumed that the following were appointed to labour in this country—Messrs. J. Johnson, Kead, Morgan, Thompson, Penington, Murray, Waldron, Guilford and Rourke.

On September 1st Mr. Johnson landed at Dublin, but in a very delicate state of health, and was confined to his room for about three weeks. Finding his disorder, however, not abating, and yearning to proclaim again the glad tidings of salvation, he went to the chapel and preached, but had to be carried home in a chair. At this service the first collection, amounting to £4 2s 6d, was made "to support preachers in their journeys amongst the people who had not as yet had the Gospel preached to them." From continuing these labours Mr. Johnson had a relapse, his complaint became more violent than ever, and his weakness such that he could not walk without help, yet he was so anxious about the prosperity of the work and the salvation of souls, that he could not be prevented from preaching at least twice each week.

On November 21st in Dublin, after a few days' sickness, Mr. Kead died in the full assurance of faith, only about two months after his wife had passed home to heaven. When Mr. Johnson went into the pulpit to preach his funeral sermon, the people were much affected to see him, as they thought, on the brink of eternity, and still more so when they reflected on the recent death of one whom they had loved so well. Two persons under this sermon were enabled to believe on the Lord Jesus for the remission of sins. Soon after the service concluded the preacher became quite delirious, but the Lord was pleased to restore him to health after a protracted illness.

Chapter XXV.

1763.

ALLUSION has already been made to the weak health and nervous temperament of Mr. Morgan. These gradually assumed a very serious form. On February 8th, 1763, Mr. Wesley writes to his brother Charles :—"James Morgan has been in a violent storm and is scarce alive," doubtless referring to his having become exceedingly discouraged and depressed in spirit, so that he withdrew a second time from the active work. Mr. Morgan's own account is—"The weight of the undertaking, the important solemn light in which I viewed it, and the anxiety of mind on that head, reduced my body to a skeleton, I could hold out no longer, so I withdrew and resolved never to preach again." He passed the winter and a great part of the spring in retirement, speaking but little to anyone, and applying his mind to reading and meditation. Then by a mysterious Providence, and after much resistance on his part, he was a third time taken from his retreat, and constrained to speak again in public of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. It seems, however, exceedingly doubtful that he ever regained his former mental vigour ; as he became very sensitive, was not happy in his work, and too frequently came into unpleasant collision with his brethren.

During the spring John Murray was stationed on the northern round, and a passing glance is given of him at work for Christ. On Easter Sunday he preached at Richhill, much people gathered to hear, his text was Mark xii. 34, and the Word preached was accompanied with Divine power to the hearts of those who heard, especially to that of the young lady who subsequently became Mrs. Whitestone. She says, when the service was ended and the people dismissed, she was unwilling to go away, and remained to praise God with a few who had joined together to build each other up on their most holy faith. With these she had met before, but was unwilling

to join them, fearing the scandal of the cross, but now without hesitation she gave up herself, body, soul and spirit to the Lord for ever.

Although Methodism had evidently a footing in Wicklow for some time, the earliest notice of this has reference to this period. In the beginning of May Mr. Johnson went to this county for the benefit of his health, which continued seriously affected. He remained there for about three weeks, and preached once or twice each day, thus strengthening the cause there.

The great work of spreading Scriptural holiness continued this year, and numerous testimonies might be given of those who became partakers of this glorious blessing, but the following will suffice :—

On Sunday, May 22nd, while Mrs. Bennis knelt at the Lord's table, and pleaded in earnest prayer, the question was spoken to her heart, "Believest Thou that I am able to do this?" Her soul eagerly answered, "Lord, I do believe Thou art able;" and the word came again, "Be it unto thee according to thy faith." In receiving the memorials of her dying Lord, she was enabled to lay hold of Christ for complete salvation from all sin. But the adversary still pressed her, and would fain have deprived her of this blessing. The spiritual conflict continued until the 2nd of June, when in private prayer she besought the Lord for deliverance, and obtained victory through the blood of the Lamb. Her heart was so filled with love to God that she was constrained to cry out, "Lord Jesus, Thou art the only object of my soul; Thou hast taken possession of my heart, and there is no room for any beside Thyself. Thou art my portion, my only treasure, and, as such, my soul with all her strength lays hold on Thee, my God, my Jesus, my all." She was now, it seemed to her, brought into a new world; every power and faculty of her mind was, as it were, newly moulded; the Word of God became increasingly precious to her, and fresh light shone on its sacred pages, so that she could see more clearly the meaning of its teaching, and grasp more firmly the fulfilment of its promises. She found an entire deliverance from those evil tempers and desires which before had been grievous to her. Her will was brought into

complete subjection to the Divine will, and her love to God was more pure, entire, and disinterested than heretofore. Although thus unspeakably happy, she was not beyond the reach of spiritual adversaries; but they had not the same power as formerly: for

“She had a shield could quell their rage,
And drive the alien armies back.”

During a visit of this devoted woman to Waterford, she spoke to a young man named John Stretton about his soul, and was thus the means of his conversion. Some years after, he removed to Newfoundland, and became a prominent and successful local preacher there. He built, at his own cost, the first Methodist chapel in Eastern British America, at Harbour Grace; and in the absence of any regularly appointed minister, continued for years to conduct stated services, and thus gave to Methodism there a character and a stability, which it retains to the present day.

The English Conference met in London on July 19th. Unfortunately no explicit record of the proceedings exists. Wesley's brief account is, “It was a great blessing that we had peace among ourselves, while so many were making themselves ready for battle.” A second edition, however, of “The Large Minutes,” was published, containing the added legislation of the previous ten years. This includes a brief statement of the design of God in raising up the Methodist preachers, an earnest injunction not to neglect out-door services, and various regulations with regard to society and children's meetings, extravagance in dress, smuggling, bribery, and the duties of preachers in general, as well as assistants in particular. The greatest hindrances to field preaching are stated to be from the rich, or cowardly, or lazy Methodists, who are not to be regarded in this matter. To prevent strangers being present more than twice or thrice at Society meetings, tickets are required to be shewn by each person before admission. The duty of examining and instructing members in their own homes is earnestly urged, and detailed questions given. The observance of the rules of the bands is insisted on, particularly those relating to ruffles; and means proposed to encourage meeting in band. Instructions are given

as to the method of conducting the meetings of children. A woman is not permitted to marry without the consent of her parents, except under certain circumstances, but even then a preacher ought not to marry her. The sermon on evil speaking is appointed to be read in every Society. Smuggling, buying or selling uncustomed goods, and bribery, are strongly condemned. Very full and detailed instructions are given to the preachers with regard to their studies, the early morning services, and the use and enforcement of the means of grace, as well as the weekly meetings of the Society, of leaders, and of bands, the monthly watch-nights, and the half-yearly love-feasts. The itinerants are to visit every Society once a quarter, to make a regular catalogue of members, at least once a year, and to write Wesley an account of all the defects of "the common preachers," which they could not themselves cure. They are strictly to watch against the world, the devil, themselves, and besetting sins; and to deny themselves every useless pleasure of sense, imagination, and honour. They are recommended to use only that kind and that degree of food which is best for the body and the soul; to eat no flesh and no late suppers, and to take only three meals a day. No one is permitted to exhort in any of the Societies without a note of recommendation from the Assistant, which is to be renewed yearly.

It is stated that the office of an Assistant has not been thoroughly executed by one out of three, and very full particulars are given as to future attention to the rules, and the course which should be pursued. No public building is to be undertaken without the consent of the Assistant; the style of each new erection is to be that of the Rotherham house, and it is to be settled according to the form given, that of the trust deed of the chapel in Manchester.

At this time several of the preachers felt the sad effects of protracted and incessant labours, and hence the question presented itself to the attention of the Conference, "How may provision be made for old and worn-out preachers?" This was answered by the institution of a general fund, called the Annuitant Fund, to which every preacher was expected to subscribe ten shillings annually, and from which such worn-

out preachers and their families as were in need, together with the widows and children of deceased ministers, were to be assisted.

The question also arose how a fund might be raised to relieve chapel debts, to employ additional preachers, especially in parts such as the north-west of Ireland, where they were most required, and to pay legal expenses that might be incurred as the result of persecution. And this was met by the appointment of an annual subscription, to be proposed by every Assistant, when he visited the classes at Christmas, and to be received at the visitation following. This was the origin of the Yearly Collection.

Ireland was divided into seven circuits or rounds, viz. :—Dublin, Waterford, Cork, Limerick, Castlebar, Athlone, and the North.

Although there is no record of the stations, it may be assumed that the following, who travelled in this country during the subsequent year, were amongst those appointed to Ireland :—Messrs. Johnson, Bastable, Penington, Taylor, Clough and Helton. Of Cornelius Bastable, who began to travel in 1745, Wesley says—"He is an uncommon monument of the power of grace, strengthening the understanding, as well as renewing the heart. For so weak a head, and so bad a temper as he once had, I do not know among all our preachers."

Thomas Taylor, a Yorkshireman, was a preacher of rare excellence, combining undaunted courage with unwavering perseverance and self-sacrificing zeal, which sustained him in trials and afflictions that would have overwhelmed a man of softer mould, or milder type of character. Having walked all the way from his native county to London to offer himself for the work, he was kindly received by Mr. Wesley and the Conference of 1761, and forthwith sent to Wales. For two years he traversed the mountains of the Principality, enduring numerous hardships from hunger and cold, from journeys among bleak and almost trackless hills, and at times from persecuting mobs; but his labours were owned and blessed by the Great Head of the Church, so that he succeeded in forming numerous Societies, and in winning many souls for Jesus.

James Clough came from Rochdale, and entered the

itinerancy in 1760. John Helton was a native of Cork, a blockmaker by trade, but gave up his business to work for Christ, and was this year received on trial.

On July 10th Mr. Johnson arrived at Limerick, where he says God was pleased to favour him greatly by giving him to see the prosperity of the cause in this city. About seventy soldiers and upwards of twenty of the townspeople were turned to the Lord. Brother Dillon assisted him much, and God crowned his labours also in the conversion of many.

Mr. Taylor was appointed to the Castlebar circuit, but remained in Dublin *en route* for about a fortnight and preached with some degree of satisfaction, especially in the square of the Royal Barracks, where many of the soldiers attended, and behaved remarkably well, "as they did in every place in Ireland." From the metropolis he set out for his circuit, preaching at Drumcree, Athlone, Aughrim, and Hollymount, by the way, and found the people very hospitable and loving. At Castlebar instead of having crowds following him, as in Pembrokeshire, he was shut up in a little dark corner, had but three small congregations, and was surrounded by Romanists, who neither understood his language, nor dare attend his meetings. But he attacked their errors without mercy, and had it not been for three troops of dragoons in the town, who were regular hearers, he would certainly have paid dearly for his temerity. At Drummersnave also, during a Catholic station, when a large number of people were collected, he assailed their opinions, but it only stirred up their rage, and imperilled his own life. Some good, however, he says, was done during his stay on this circuit; the membership was a little increased, and the congregations much enlarged.

Mr. Clough arrived in the metropolis early in September, and says: "The people in Dublin I like exceedingly well, and I hope my coming here will be attended with a blessing to my own soul. God grant that it prove so to the souls of others! I find my soul alive to God, and have this determination—to know nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." He also informs his correspondent, that "Brother Penington sends his Christian love to her," which shews that this devoted servant of God was evidently labouring with him in the city at this time.

John Smith, who up to the present had confined his labours to Cootehill and the immediate neighbourhood, now found an unexpected field of usefulness in Fermanagh. Some idea of the moral state of this county may be formed from the following incident related of the Rev. Philip Skelton, who had resided here for about four years. While he was in Dublin, the Oak boys seized Arthur Johnston, Esq., of Enniskillen, and ordered him to be true to their cause, but he refused obstinately ; on which they put a rope about his neck, and were on the point of hanging him, when he was rescued out of their hands. Skelton, on his return, met Mr. Johnston, and putting his hand in his pocket took out a shilling, and offered it to him saying, "Here, take this. I gave a shilling to see a camel in Dublin, but an honest man is a greater wonder in Fermanagh." The first place in this county visited by Smith was Tonymolman, which was the first place in the county into which Methodism was introduced, and the first member of the Society was an old soldier named William Price, familiarly called "Uncle Will ;" his history deserves special notice. When a young man he enlisted in the Enniskillen Dragoons, went with his regiment to Flanders, and fought at the battles of Dettingen and Fontenoy. He was brought to experience the power of religion through the zealous exertions of John Haime. On one occasion when the regiment was drawn up and the cannon began to play upon them, the words of the Psalmist were suggested to the mind of Price : "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at the right hand ; but it shall not come nigh thee ;" and filled his soul with love and peace. He escaped unhurt, and in 1762 returned to Fermanagh, where he endeavoured to lead his friends to a saving knowledge of the truth ; but his words appeared to them as idle tales. Discouraged by lack of success, and being without one pious acquaintance, his love grew cold ; but he retained an interest in the cause of Christ, and an earnest desire for its prosperity. Having heard of the success of Methodism in the county of Cavan he went there, invited John Smith to his neighbourhood, and under his forceful preaching the faith and fervour of former days were revived. The old soldier prevailed on Thomas Price—who appears to have been his son—with whom he lived, to invite

the local preacher to his house, and used his best exertions to collect his friends and neighbours to hear him. Only a few attended at first, amongst whom were two sons of a cousin of William Price, named Nehemiah and John Price, who thus received their earliest religious impressions ; and when a class was formed it consisted of only eight persons.

At the close of the year, Mr. Bastable laboured at Cork in the midst of numerous discouragements. On December 13th Mr. Wesley writes : " It has seemed to me for some time that God will not suffer Cornelius Bastable to live at Cork. He will starve there, but he cannot live. The people are not worthy of him."

Chapter XV.

1764.

ON January 1st, 1764, Mr. Johnson returned to Dublin, where he continued for six months. His colleague was John Helton, and as they united heartily and faithfully in work for Christ, the Lord gave His blessing, and their labours were crowned with much success.

D. Wright, who at this time was quartered in Newry, continued to work with fidelity for his Master, notwithstanding the serious opposition he had to encounter, both from those in authority and an ignorant rabble. But neither reproaches and threats on the one hand, nor stones and rotten eggs on the other, moved this brave soldier from the path of duty. " Were the chaplains," he says, " men of real piety and courage, much good might be done in the army ; but the chaplaincy is generally a kind of sinecure, and the care of souls is left to any worthless wretch that will do it at an easy rate. When we lay in one city, the care of four or five regiments was left to an unhappy man, who was an object of common ridicule among the soldiers for his perpetual drunkenness."

Mr. Wright narrates the following remarkable conversion.

One evening, as a poor drunkard returned home, much in liquor, he saw in the distance a crowd on a green, and, imagining there was a cockfight, made his way to it as best he could ; but it was a congregation listening to a sermon by one of the preachers, which was drawing to a close. "Are there any drunkards here?" inquired the servant of God, applying his discourse in a manner which has often proved most successful. "Yes, I am one," said the poor inebriate, and at that instant he was seized with such deep conviction of sin as never passed away until he became a new man.

About this period, Robert Strawbridge having removed to Tanderagee, where he was employed in erecting some buildings near the town, made Terryhoogan his headquarters. From this, as a centre, he itinerated through the adjoining country, where his labours were highly prized, and where his name and memory were cherished by all who knew him. Here, also, he married a Miss Piper, one of the worthy Methodists of the place, and soon after, with his young wife, bade farewell to Ireland to find his life work and final resting place in the New World.

In the spring, God revived His work greatly in Waterford. Duncan Wright, who had then removed with his regiment to the city, speaks of being much quickened and blessed.

There was a little Society in the county of Wexford, the members of which met in a barn, and used to fasten the door to secure themselves from annoyance by a Catholic mob. Being thus excluded from the meeting the rioters became curious to know what was done there, and having taken counsel together, agreed that one of their number should get in and secret himself before the congregation assembled, so that he might see all that was going on, and at a proper time let in his companions. The adventurer could find no better means of concealment than by getting into a sack, which he found there, and lying down in a corner near the entrance. The people collected, secured the door as usual, and began their service by singing. The mob collected also, and growing impatient called repeatedly on their comrade within to open the door ; but he happened to have a taste for music, and liked the singing so well, that he thought, as he afterwards said, it would be a thou-

sand pities to disturb it. When the hymn was sung, and prayer began, in spite of all the vociferation of his friends outside, he thought that as he had been so well pleased with the singing he would see how he liked the prayer; but in answer to the earnest pleading of these believing souls, the power of God descended, and so confounded him that he roared out with might and main, and unable to get out of the sack, lay there to the astonishment and dismay of the congregation, who probably supposed that Satan himself was present. Some one at last ventured to see who was in the sack, and helping the poor fellow out, brought him up, confessing his sins, and crying aloud for mercy, which proved the beginning of a lasting work in his soul.

It was at about this period Methodism was introduced into the town of Wexford. The preachers had to endure, as in most other places, the hooting and pelting of mobs, but the Lord stood by them, so that no serious injury was sustained. The services were held in the house of a man named Morgan, a member of the Society, who lived in a back street. It was a commodious place, fitted up with desk and benches. Morgan was a poor man, with a family to support; but he had a rich brother who despised and hated the Methodists, and in order to drive them out of the town, offered to settle an annuity on his humble relative, if he would leave the Society and close his room against the preachers. The offer was too tempting to be rejected, so down came the desk, out went the benches, and no preacher was permitted to enter the house. Before the first quarterly instalment became due, the poor man died, and thus not one penny was gained by his weak-minded apostacy. His widow, however, continued faithful to Methodism, and a kind Providence supplied her wants in a most unexpected manner, thus realizing a fulfilment of the promise, "Trust in the Lord, and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed."

During the first six months of this year, Thomas Taylor was on the Athlone circuit, where he found much more work to do than at Castlebar, and where he suffered seriously, as many others of the early preachers did, from damp beds, so that his speech and hearing were well nigh taken from him.

However, when he was able, he preached in the open air in most of the towns on his round, and not in vain.

Mr. Penington was in Cork, where his earnest and faithful labours were much blessed. The face of things, he says, was in a great measure completely changed, the members of the Society, and especially the leaders, were much stirred up, and the congregations also were considerably increased, many strangers and backsliders attending the services regularly. This improvement he traced, first, to the meetings he had commenced for singing, prayer, reading and exhortation, in five or six different parts of the city, amongst those who were quite neglected, and were thus aroused to religious concern. Another power for good was street preaching. He first preached near the barracks, then leaving that place to Mr. Bastable, he took his stand in the very heart of Blackpool, and preached the Gospel to large and attentive audiences.

In the North also the work spread. From Clonmain the good seed was carried to the parish of Grange, in the county of Armagh, where a flourishing Society was formed, composed of persons in better circumstances than that of the majority of Methodists at this early period. One of these a person named Morrow, being related to another called Finn, residing about a mile from Portadown, at Kilmoriarty, a door was thus opened for Methodism in the last-named place.

In the previous year a Society had been formed in Belfast, consisting of a few very poor people. This year, in the lack of a chapel, the members secured an old slaughter-house for the services, and in this humble sanctuary the preachers ministered the Word of life. It was here that Wm. Black first heard the Gospel. Being then a youth of eighteen, he was invited by some of his companions to attend a meeting, and he and they went, more however to gratify curiosity than for edification. Two soldiers conducted the service, and the power of God accompanied the word read and spoken. William was deeply convinced of sin, and resolved to abandon evil company and practices. On their way home, as his companions endeavoured to turn the meeting into ridicule, he asked them if they were not ashamed to mock coming out of the house of God. They replied that it was no house of God, but an old slaughter-house,

to which he answered: "Be that as it may, it was the house of God to me."

During the third quarter of this year, Mr. Swindells was in Dublin, and Mr. Johnson in Limerick. The latter says that at the end of the three months, he left several very happy in the Lord, and others, he feared, professing more than they enjoyed. His congregations were as large as in former days, but he did not see as much fruit.

Mr. Taylor was in Cork with Richard Blackwell, a young man of remarkable promise, whose brief career was crowned with a glorious and triumphant end. These servants of God entered heartily into the blessed work commenced under Mr. Penington. Mr. Taylor preached in the open air in different parts of the city, the prayer meetings were regularly held, the class leaders met every Saturday night, and each had his work for the subsequent week assigned to him, strict discipline was observed, and thus the work of the Lord prospered on every side. In Bandon, however, the Society was in a very dead state; Mr. Taylor despairing of good being done, almost determined to go there no more; but Mr. Blackwell persevered, preached in the open air until his health failed, and the Lord gave testimony to His Word. Many were convinced of sin and found peace, some of whom became members of the Society. So the work went on until Mr. Morgan came to the circuit. He was the senior preacher, though Mr. Taylor was the Assistant, and owing partly to this, and partly to a difference of opinion as to discipline, they did not work together as heartily as might have been desired.

The following marked answer to prayer was vouchsafed. There was a Miss T—— in Cork, who had fallen into a state of religious depression, bordering on utter despair. She would not be comforted, and had lost all relish for prayer, while her distress was sufficient to affect the most unfeeling. She was removed to Dublin and placed in Swift's Hospital for the Insane, where she continued in her sad and pitiable condition. At length a gleam of hope shone into her soul, and she sent her mother a note to request Mr. Morgan to set apart a certain day for fasting and prayer on her behalf. He not only appointed the day, but also desired the brethren in Limerick and the Cork

friends to meet him at the throne of grace on Tuesday, 18th December, which proved a time of rich spiritual blessing to all who were present. A few days after he received the following letter: "Dear Brother, I have just time to inform you of the mercy of God to Miss T——, she was brought from Swift's Hospital on Sunday evening, and on Tuesday night, 18th inst., about ten o'clock, was in the utmost distress. She thought she saw Christ and Satan fighting for her, and that she heard Christ say, 'I will save her.' In a moment hope sprang up in her heart; the promises of God flowed in upon her, and she cried—'I am taken from hell to heaven.' She now declares she could not tell whether she was in the body or out of it. She is much tempted, but in her right mind, enjoying a sense of the mercy of God. She remembers all that is past, and considers it a punishment for her sins." Surely this was the Lord's doings, and it is marvellous in our eyes.

In October Mr. Johnson returned to Dublin, where his colleague was James Dempster, a Scotchman, who had just been received on trial, a young man of liberal education, having studied at the University of Edinburgh. While here Mr. Johnson received a letter entreating that a preacher might be sent to Londonderry. Methodism had been introduced into this city about the year 1753, by Thomas Williams, but his unsteadiness blighted the hopeful prospect presented: so that for several years the preachers were withdrawn. A few, however, continued to meet together, and thus the spirit of piety was graciously sustained amongst them. Two at least of these claim a passing notice. Of one Mr. Pritchard writes, "John Smith was a pattern to all that believed. He for years stemmed the tide, and swam against the stream of corrupt customs and sinful examples." The other, James Godfrey, maintained a consistent walk to the close of a very long life. These two humble but worthy men, feeling deeply the lack of former Methodist services, resolved if possible to secure the labours of a preacher, and therefore wrote to Dublin. Mr. Johnson being unable to go himself, sent James Clough, who was not a little astounded on arriving at the city, and seeing he humble circumstances of those by whom he had been

invited. While this worthy brother was labouring in the midst of great discouragements in his new circuit, a remarkable circumstance took place in Dublin, which had an important bearing on the work at Londonderry. A trooper named Weir, who, in a moment of excitement under the influence of strong drink, had mortally wounded a person that insulted him, was condemned to death, and when in jail under his sentence was converted to God through the Divine blessing on the visits of Mr. Johnson. The glorious testimony to the power of Divine grace which this condemned culprit bore at his execution, which was referred to in the public papers, produced a most profound impression, and led to a large increase in the Society and congregation in the metropolis. An account of the conversion and dying testimony of this "brand plucked from the burning" was published in the form of a tract, some copies of which reached Londonderry, and one of them was placed in the hands of a lady, who in her youth had heard Thomas Williams preach. Her husband, Mr. Alexander Knox, a descendant of the celebrated Scotch reformer, was a gentleman of great ability and high moral character, and also one of the leading members of the Corporation. Mrs. Knox read the tract with intense interest, and her husband entering the room as it was finished, she said to him, "Here is the religion that will make you and me happy! Read it, and praise God who has shown us the way of peace." He read it, believed, and "gave glory to God." Soon after they both joined the Society, from which they never separated.

In the meantime Mr. Wesley having written to Duncan Wright, that if he left the army there was immediate work for him in the itinerancy, and his way being opened, he came to Dublin, where he was kindly received by the preachers and the Society. Here he became acquainted with Dr. Davis, a surgeon in the army, remarkable for his wit, whose history is worthy of note. Being invited by a friend to go and hear John Carr, one of the local preachers, he consented, and went, merely to take the preacher off, as he expressed it. "But," said he, "while I was leaning on my cane looking at him through my fingers during his first prayer, an arrow went to my heart, which sent me home, bruised and wounded." He

then sought the true Physician, who soon brought him to a healthful mind. One day, being at the military infirmary, Francis May, a serious man, the porter of the house, said to him, "Sir, we want prayer and a word of exhortation very much in this house; would you pray with two or three, if I get them together?" "Really, Frank," said the doctor, "I never prayed in my life with more than two or three serious people; and I know not how to begin with any others." "Sir," said Frank, "it is high time you should begin. Begin to-day, sir; begin now." The doctor was prevailed on. Away went Frank and informed all the house, that Dr. Davis was going to preach to them. Down came every soul that could crawl—the sick, the lame, and the lazy—to the long room, where the chaplains used to read prayers. Away went Frank to the doctor. "Now, sir," said he, "I have got a few of them." When the doctor came to the room door, and saw the place full, he was for going back. "Nay, sir," said Frank, "you cannot do that for your life. There they are; the Lord has delivered them into your hands; and will you start from His work?" In short, the doctor went in, stood on a form, sung, prayed, and having his pocket Bible with him, read a portion to them, discoursed an hour and a half, and from that time preached to the soldiers wherever he could. At length, having visited some prisoners at Newgate, who had a malignant fever, he caught the infection and finished his course rejoicing in God his Saviour.

Chapter XVII.

1765.

DURING 1765, as well as the preceding year, there was a considerable increase in the membership of the Society, both in England and in Ireland.

In the beginning of the year Mr. Taylor removed to Limerick, where he found the cause in a very different state from that in which it was at Cork. The people, he says, were

languid and lifeless, and his own spirit was rather irritated, so that he did not see much fruit, except at Kilfinnane.

In January Mr. Morgan removed from Cork to Dublin, where large numbers attended his ministry, which was much acknowledged of the Lord. By the end of March no less than one hundred were added to the Society, and about fifty persons professed to be converted. In April he received into the Society Mr. Henry Brooke, an artist and drawing-master, and a man of remarkable piety and worth. He was subsequently held in high esteem by Mr. Wesley and Mr. Fletcher, and for many years occupied a prominent place amongst the Methodists of the metropolis.

Mr. Wright, having learned that there was no preacher in Waterford, returned to that city, and spent some time among his former acquaintances. Then he saw, as he had not done before, the craven, intolerant spirit of the Irish Roman Catholics. He says, "While I carried a sword by my side, few of them cared to speak their minds; but now, that restraint being removed, several of them told me to my face that they thought it would be doing God and the Church service to burn all such as I am in one fire! The infatuation of many, owing to the ignorance they are kept in, cannot be described; for upon the least pretence, and often without any, they rise in large parties, well armed, to destroy the lives and properties of their neighbours, oppose the magistracy, and even insult the army."

On May 1st Mr. Wesley arrived at Donaghadee, and proceeded at once to Newtownards, where he spent a day "endeavouring to lift up the hands of a poor, scattered, dejected people." In the evening he preached on the Green, and though it was exceedingly cold, none of the congregation seemed to regard it. Amongst those present was Margaret Davidson, who had been brought over from Comber. She says, "Mr. Wesley preached from these words, 'Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.' While he was speaking my heart was inflamed with love to God and man; and as I was placed near him, I could just observe the waving of his hand between me and the light. After preaching, he took me gently by the hand and said, 'Faint not, go on, and you shall see in glory.' These words left a lasting impression on my

mind. I was also present when he met the Society; and at parting he commended us 'to God and to the word of His grace.' I was melted into tears, and could only say, 'The will of the Lord be done.'

At Lisburn Mr. Wesley preached to large and attentive congregations, met "what was left of the Society," and also recommenced the five o'clock morning service that had been discontinued for three years, to which he ascribed the scattering and deadness of the people. At Newry, in the Market-house, the whole congregation seemed more affected than for some years previously. At Terryhoogan there was much of the power of God among a plain, simple-hearted people; and at Clonmain a lively, earnest congregation.

Some idea may be formed of the numbers and financial circumstances of the Societies in this district from the statement of the money paid in at the quarterly meeting of the Newry round, held on June 25th:—Clonmain, 11s 4d; Terryhoogan, 7s; Newry, 18s; Rathfriland, 6s 6d; Richhill, 14s 1d; Lisburn, 16s 3d; Belfast, —; Carrickfergus, —; Newtownards, 9s 2d; Comber, 5s 5d; Grange, £1 3s 1½d; Cockhill, 10s 10d. Total, £6 1s 8½d. It will be seen that neither Belfast nor Carrickfergus contributed anything to the circuit income. There is a charge of one halfpenny for paper to write to these places, probably to incite them to greater liberality, which was not altogether fruitless, as in the corresponding quarter in 1766, Belfast contributed 5s 4d, and in the September following, 7s.

Accompanied by Mr. Ryan, Mr. Wesley set out for Londonderry, where they arrived on May 11th, Mr. Johnson having got there three days previously, to take the place of Mr. Clough. Wesley was entertained by Mr. Knox, who on the following Sunday took him to the cathedral, and led him to the Corporation-pew, where he was placed next the Mayor, Mr. William Kennedy. This resulted in an invitation from the latter to dinner, which was accepted. Mr. Wesley remained for more than a fortnight in the city, and preached in the Linen hall. On one occasion "nearly all the inhabitants of the city were present," and so general an impression upon a congregation he had hardly ever seen. He

exhorted the Society to be patterns of diligence, frugality, and cleanliness. After he had left, Mr. Johnson inquired into the state of the membership, which consisted of sixty persons, and found that for the most part they had sunk into the doctrine and spirit of Antinomianism. He met the classes every week, and had many doctrinal disputes with the members, so that he often wished he had never seen them; but in about two months, in answer to prayer, the greater part were convinced of, and renounced their errors, and inconsistent professors were put away. Then the arm of the Lord was made bare, and the work prospered.

Meanwhile Mr. Wesley proceeded through Donegal and Ballyshannon to Sligo, where he found that low as the cause had been three years previously it was still lower now, "Such a total want of good sense, of good manners, yea, of common decency, was shown by not a few of the hearers;" but afterwards the congregations increased very considerably, and there were tokens of improvement. At Castlebar he found a more lively people than at Sligo, and was much refreshed among them. Most of the local gentry were present at the service in the Court-house. At Newport he preached to the largest congregation he remembered to have seen there. At Galway the preaching-room being small, some of the friends prevailed on him to preach in the Exchange; but, as he feared, "the beasts of the people" made such an uproar that he was compelled to desist, and walked through their midst to his lodgings without let or hindrance. At Ennis a serious, well-behaved congregation made some amends for the turbulent audience at Galway. At Limerick Wesley found the new preaching-house just finished, and "liked it the best of any in the kingdom, being neat, yea elegant, yet not gaudy." On Sunday evening he preached at Mardyke to a large number of both Protestants and Catholics. Some of the latter kept talking and laughing, but he reproved them, and they ceased. During the following week he examined the Society; concerning several there was reason to believe they had given God their whole hearts, and many others were earnestly seeking full salvation. On June 14th he left Limerick with Duncan Wright, who accompanied him during the remainder of his tour in Ireland, and then left with

him for England. At Ballingarrane he preached to the small remnant of the poor Palatines. As they could not procure food and raiment here, with all their diligence and frugality, part had scattered up and down through the kingdom, and part had gone to America. At Newmarket he preached to a large congregation of Romanists, as well as Protestants. In the Market-house at Kilfinnane, well nigh all the people of the town, Irish, English and German, Protestants and Catholics, gathered together, and at the close of the service many followed him to his lodgings, when he again exhorted and prayed with them. At Doneraile, men, women and children flocked to hear from all sides.

At Cork Wesley was surprised at the unusual size of the congregation. He had often been grieved at the smallness of his auditories here, and "it could not," he says, "be otherwise, while we cooped ourselves up in the house. But now the alarm is sounded abroad, and people flock from all quarters. So plain it is that field preaching is the most effectual way of overturning Satan's kingdom." He preached not only at Blackpool, but also in George street, where many of the chief of the city, clergy as well as laity, were amongst the audience. On examining the Society he found two hundred and ninety-five members, being fifty or sixty more than had been here for some years previously. At Bandon he preached in the Main street to an exceedingly large congregation, and also near the upper Market-house, which was only a few yards distant from the chapel. At Youghal he preached in the Exchange: four or five noisy men made some disturbance until he reproved them sharply, then the whole congregation listened with attention. The word, however, did not seem to sink into their hearts, many were pleased, but few convinced. He also met the infant Society, consisting of nineteen members, all of whom were full of good desires, and some knew whom they had believed.

At Waterford Wesley preached in a little court on our "Great High Priest who is passed into heaven for us," but soon found that he was above most of his hearers, and should have spoken of death or judgment. So on the following day he suited his discourse to his audience, which was considerably increased, and deep attention was apparent on almost every

face. He left them with many prayers and blessings. At Kilkenny he preached in the assembly room to many persons of respectability and influence, and the congregations increased in seriousness as well as numbers. At Portarlinton the audience in the Market-house was numerous, and he had great liberty of speech. At Mountmellick he preached in the Market place, to almost all the Protestants in the town, and not a few Romanists, and left many of the people much alive to God, and athirst for full salvation. Here a new chapel was now built, which continued in use for about one hundred and seventeen years. At the morning service in Tullamore the house was nearly full. At Aughrim there was a serious congregation; and at Athlone the audience was never so large.

At Coolalough the quarterly meeting was held as usual, many assembled from various parts of the country, and Wesley preached under the shade of some spreading trees. At Tyrrell's Pass some persons of influence were present, and he preached with a peculiar blessing from God. At Edenderry many Quakers were in the audience. At Donard he "met with more noise and stupid senseless impudence" than he had found since he left England, but the chief man of the town having handled one of the disturbers roughly, and another of them being knocked down, he concluded his discourse without further hindrance. At Carlow he preached in a courtyard to a multitude of people, rich and poor. Here he was the guest of Mr. Charles Laher, a respectable local trader.

In Dublin on examining the Society, Wesley found more than five hundred members, being a larger number than at any other time previously, and also that they were not only increased in numbers, but many of them rejoiced in the love of God, and others were earnest by seeking the same blessing. The congregations in the Barrack square were also such as he had never before seen in the city.

The Conference was held on July 25th and 26th, and amongst the regulations adopted were the following :—Societies and congregations were to be taught singing. The preachers were to meet the Societies and bands everywhere; to encourage all in the bands to speak freely; in Dublin, Cork, and Limerick, to meet the married men and women apart, and the

single men and single women apart ; in all the larger Societies to meet the children ; to use intercession on Fridays ; and to recommend fasting, both by precept and example. The people were to be urged to have family prayer, morning and evening, after having read a portion of Scripture, taking Philip Henry's method as a pattern ; to be good economists ; and to guard against little oaths, as " upon my life, my faith, my honour," and little compliments or unmeaning words. The members might be tenderly and prudently recommended to call each other brother and sister. As a rule they talked too much and read too little, and should be reprov'd for reading less useful books. Many were enslaved to snuff, some drank drams, and the religion of most was too superficial. To remedy these evils, the preachers were enjoined on no account to take snuff or drink drams themselves, to shew the Societies the evil of these, to speak to any that they saw taking snuff, to answer the pretence that drams cured the colic and helped digestion, to preach on the most spiritual subjects, to exhort all believers to go on to perfection, and earnestly to recommend private prayer, reading the Scriptures, and universal self-denial.

On August 2nd Wesley embarked for England, having spent four months in this country ; and on the 20th opened the English Conference at Manchester. Four brethren from Ireland were received on trial—Duncan Wright, John Dillon, Richard Bourke and James Rea : and fifteen preachers were appointed to labour here, ten being the largest number previously of which there is any record, thus showing how the work had extended and prospered. The appointments also, for the first time, appear to have been made for twelve months, unless in cases in which a change seemed desirable. As a list of stations appears in " the Minutes" it is not necessary that it should be repeated here.

Of the work in Ireland during the remainder of the year little is recorded, and that has reference only to Londonderry and Dublin. In Derry Mr. Johnson having regularly constituted the Society, which consisted of seventy-one members, such as he believed were in earnest, in October returned to Dublin, his place being supplied by Mr. Thompson, and continued at work for Christ in the metropolis until the end of the year.

Chapter XVII.

1766.

At the close of 1765 Mr. Morgan came to Dublin to assist Mr. Johnson, which led to an increase of the congregations ; and although there was not such an extensive revival, as had taken place in the city twelve months previously, yet the Society in general was much alive to God.

In the spring Mr. Johnson went to Limerick, where he remained two months, but says he never saw less fruit to his labours, only two additions being made to the membership. But a few days before he left the city many of the soldiers attended the service, and a sergeant and two privates were awakened.

During this year a house adjoining the Whitefriar street chapel was leased for the accommodation of a number of indigent widows of at least sixty years of age, the management of which was placed in the hands of the preachers in Dublin, for the time being, and seven trustees. The following were the original trustees :—Messrs. George Grant, William Hall, James Martin, Thomas Bond, Patrick Geoghegan, Thomas Bible and William Gaskell. Mr. Bond was the first treasurer, but he only held the office for one year, and was succeeded by Mr. Martin.

About this period the good cause at Comber sustained some sad reverses. Two leaders of the Society having died in succession, there was no one qualified to fill the vacant place. The only person who had the gifts was wanting in the required grace, and he at length was expelled from the Society, and deprived of the presence of the preachers in his house, the only one then open in the town for their entertainment. Indeed, so low did the cause ebb that the preachers advised Margaret Davidson to escape from the place at the peril of her salvation, because the judgments of God would certainly fall on the inhabitants for rejecting the Gospel of Christ. This led her to remove to Lisburn where she continued about seven years.

There were then only fourteen members in this town, and these chiefly women ; but during this year they received a valuable accession in the person of William Black, a stocking-weaver, who had been converted in Belfast. His presence and help must have greatly cheered the hearts of Mr. and Mrs. Cumberland, more especially as, just about this time, their son Frank, who was the leader, was dismissed from the office of clerk of Derryaghy church, for the crime of being a Methodist, and removed to England. Mr. Black not only met the class, but also opened his house to receive the preachers and for public services, alternately with the Cumberlands, whose daughter he married.

In Bandon, a young lady became a Methodist, who subsequently did important work for Christ in the town. She was awakened under the first sermon she heard preached by a Wesleyan, and soon after obtained the "knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins." For fifty-nine years she was a steady and faithful member of the Society. Mrs. Elizabeth Clear was an active and useful class leader and visitor of the sick. She saw Methodism in her native town a feeble, tender plant, and witnessed its growth and development, until it became a flourishing tree, deeply rooted, with widely extended branches, and many dwelling under its shade.

In July Messrs. Morgan and Johnson left Dublin for Londonderry. On inquiry into the state of the Society, Mr. Johnson found to his joy that most of those who had been brought to the Lord during his previous visit were now established in the grace of God. A preaching service was held daily, and the people were so charmed with the eloquence of Mr. Morgan that they flocked to hear in crowds, and the Lord gave His blessing with the word preached. Morgan, however, left at the end of September, and Johnson remained alone in the city until the close of the year, preaching to large and attentive congregations, with much of the Divine presence and blessing.

In Limerick also, Mrs. Bennis says, the Society was in a prosperous condition, the select bands being met regularly, and the services graciously owned of the Lord.

Not long after Methodism had been introduced by Irishmen

into the States of America, a son of Erin effected a similar work in the British settlements further north. Mr. Coughlan, who through the influence of Mr. Wesley and the Countess of Huntingdon had been ordained by the Bishop of London, was sent out by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, to Newfoundland. Here the children were without education, the people without religious instruction, and the land without Bibles. The settlers were almost lawless, and although originally from different parts of the United Kingdom, fast sinking into heathenism, or being engulfed into the soul-deceiving and God-dishonouring system of Popery. The heroic evangelist entered into this discouraging and most laborious field, and with great plainness and energy preached a free, full, and present salvation. The place where his services were held was soon filled to overflowing ; many were astonished, some ridiculed the preacher, and several were brought under the influence of Divine truth, cast themselves on the mercy of God, and found pardon through the blood of Christ. Amongst the first fruits of Coughlan's ministry was Mr. Arthur Thomey, an intelligent Irish merchant, who was engaged in the fishing business at Harbour Grace. Soon, however, the devoted missionary encountered the most formidable opposition, principally from the Episcopal clergy, who denounced him as a Methodist, because of the doctrine of salvation by faith which he preached, and of the class-meetings that he formed. He was prosecuted in the chief court of the island, but escaped the fury of his enemies. In a letter to the Society which employed him, he was accused of almost every conceivable crime, yet still bravely held on his way. At last, in order to shut the mouth of this brave preacher, some of his enemies hired a physician to poison him ; but the doctor was subsequently converted through the ministry of the sturdy evangelist, and declined to execute the diabolical design. The Lord then gave special testimony to the word of His grace preached by His servant, and many were converted, who were duly enrolled in classes both at Harbour Grace and Carbonear. The flame of persecution now rose higher, and Mr. Coughlan was summoned as a disturber of the peace, before the Governor, a discerning and resolute officer. Again the indomitable preacher was destined to triumph, for the

Governor, greatly to his credit, not only acquitted him, but also appointed him a justice of the peace. Thus, after three years of opposition, persecution was brought to a close, and the preacher pursued his labours with increasing success.

A most interesting result of Coughlan's mission was the introduction of Methodism into the Channel Islands, and thus into France. Pierre Le Sueur, a young man from Jersey, engaged in the Newfoundland trade, heard Coughlan preach at Harbour Grace, and, though convinced of sin, hesitated to give his heart to God. In this state of mind he returned to Jersey, and told his family and friends what he had heard from the missionary, and felt under his ministry. They thought him mad; but his impressions deepened, he longed for some one to direct him to the Saviour, and very opportunely John Fentin, who had been converted in Newfoundland, returned to Jersey, and encouraged him in his penitential struggle. At length one morning, while engaged in private prayer, he found mercy, and was filled with peace and joy in believing. With a full heart he went to his wife and told her what God had done for his soul. She heard with deep concern, saw her spiritual danger, earnestly sought deliverance, and at length was made a partaker of like precious faith. Feeling an anxious desire for the salvation of others, they exhorted their friends and neighbours with such unction to flee from the wrath to come, that in a week about twelve were convinced of sin, who soon after were converted, and became the foundation of the Methodist Society in the Islands.

Mr. Wesley, having recognized in John Smith, of Cootehill, a peculiar fitness for evangelistic work, and having ascertained that a large district of country, embracing nearly the whole of the counties of Monaghan, Cavan, Fermanagh and Tyrone, was in a state of spiritual destitution, wrote during the summer appointing him to work in this extensive field as a Methodist preacher. John Smith, regarding this communication as a call from God, gave up business at once, and entered heartily into the work. He, however, continued to visit Tonyloman as he had opportunity, preaching to increasing congregations. His fearless and fervent proclamation of the truth, accompanied by the power of the Holy Ghost, reached the hearts of the people,

many of whom were greatly convulsed and prostrated in body, as well as deeply agitated in mind : some fell suddenly to the ground, as if struck by lightning, praying and groaning for mercy. Frequently he had to cease preaching, unable to proceed on account of the cries for salvation, and had recourse to prayer, pleading mightily on behalf of the penitents, until prayer was turned into praise. It was not unusual for twenty or thirty to be converted during one service. As the result of these labours the Society became a centre of gracious influence to the surrounding country. The leader of the first class was old William Price, and among its first members were at least four young men, who afterwards proved useful Methodist preachers—Nehemiah and John Price, Robert Armstrong and John Mayly. As a class leader, especially, the labours of William Price were most indefatigable. Until a few months before his death in 1795 he continued to travel the country for ten miles round, forming new classes, and meeting old ones.

Among those brought to the knowledge of God in the adjacent country was Mr. Hugh Drennan, of Skea—a man of strong understanding and sound judgment, and well-known to the venerable father of Methodism, with whom he corresponded, and by whom he was highly esteemed. Hugh Drennan discharged the duties of leader and circuit-steward faithfully, exerting considerable influence in the neighbourhood, in the promotion of the kingdom of Christ, and in the maintenance of Christian unity for more than fifty years.

Some young men from Tonyloman visited the neighbourhood of Florence-Court, and were instrumental in preparing the way for the preacher. Amongst the first here brought to the saving knowledge of the truth was Miss Shanklin, who became a most devoted Christian. She lived with a sister who was married to Mr. Little, a respectable farmer : and being a woman of good sense, exercised a considerable influence in the family circle. The preacher was invited to their house, where he and his successors ever after had a hospitable welcome ; the family received much spiritual good : and their sober industrious habits secured the esteem of their neighbours.

The example of Mr. Edward Willis, of Rourkefield, a man of some influence, who was awakened and converted, also made

a favourable impression. He opened his house to receive the messenger of peace, and was himself a faithful and consistent Christian, and an acceptable local preacher.

At the time J. Smith began his labours, the parish of Clones was in a most destitute state as to religious instruction; being ten miles in length, and from six to seven in breadth, with only one church, not sufficiently large to afford accommodation even for the people of the town. Only one service was held during the week, on Sunday at noon, and very few of the rural population attended. Those who resided at a distance of four or five miles never saw the minister at their houses, and very seldom had any intercourse with him, unless at marriages or christenings. In some families a chapter or two of the Divine Word was read on the Sabbath, but by far the greater number seldom enjoyed even this advantage. In the midst of this moral and spiritual wilderness John Smith opened his commission in the house of Mr. George Nicholl, a respectable farmer, who lived at Knappagh. A large congregation assembled, and listened with respectful attention. Other meetings were held in the course of time, and the word reached the hearts of several who were led to join the Society. Among these were John Armstrong, of Lisrace; and John and James Clarke, of Cortrasna.

John and James Clarke had large families. James invited the preachers to his house, where, during his life, they found a comfortable home, and ever since have been received by his descendants and John's also, as ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Both families became strongly attached to the doctrines and discipline of Methodism. Great care was taken to impress the minds of their children with similar sentiments, and not in vain, several of the descendants of these good men, of the fourth generation, being now in close communion with the Methodist Church in Great Britain, Ireland and America. The Rev. William Ferguson was grandson of John Clarke, and the first Methodist meeting at which he was present was held in the house of his grandfather, to which he was carried in the arms of his mother. From the time of his earliest recollections they had the preacher once a fortnight, and prayer-meetings twice on Sunday, and twice in the course of the week. These

meetings were regularly attended by all the children and grandchildren of both families, and were often favoured with gracious visitations from on high.

Soon after John Smith had preached his first sermon in the parish of Clones, the good seed was carried to the town. He laboured there with success, and a society was formed ; Richard Kelso and John Kerr, respectable tradesmen, and a young man named Hugh Fauls, being among its first members. Hugh Fauls had subsequently the privilege of entertaining Mr. Wesley. So highly did he prize the communion of saints that for upwards of seventy years, except when ill or from home, he was never once absent from class. Once when at a distance on business, he rose early on the Sabbath morning, went out, and seeing a woman neatly dressed, and walking quickly, concluded she was a Methodist, followed her, entered the house into which she went, and there found, as he had anticipated, a people met to worship God, in joining with whom in Christian fellowship his spiritual strength was renewed. For many years he went every Sabbath morning to Monaghan, a distance of ten miles, to meet his class.

Another converted at this early period was a lad of fourteen, named William Boyle, who, two years afterwards, was appointed a leader, and four years subsequently a local preacher, and introduced Methodism into many districts in the surrounding country. When the unfortunate division of 1816 took place, he identified himself with the Primitive Wesleyan-Methodists, and though in his sixty-third year, entered the itinerancy in connection with that Society. During his religious career, which embraced a period of seventy-six years, he maintained an unblemished character, and died in peace in June, 1843, aged eighty-nine years. At the introduction of Methodism into Clones, an innkeeper accommodated the congregations with a barn ; but a cottage was afterwards taken in Whitehall street, to which they removed.

The spiritual prosperity with which Clones was favoured at this early period extended to Stonebridge, and several other places in the neighbourhood. At Killycronaghan, a family named Lemon having received the truth, opened their house for preaching ; and in Newbliss, a woman named Cook and

several of her daughters were converted. The village of Drum also partook of the showers of blessing that were at that time, refreshing the adjacent country.

The town and neighbourhood of Newtownbutler were visited shortly after the introduction of Methodism into the eastern part of the county. In several places the preacher was cordially welcomed. One of the first who were brought to a saving knowledge of God was Andrew Thompson, of Cornabragh, a respectable farmer, and brother of the Rev. William Thompson, the first President of the Conference after the death of Mr. Wesley. As a class leader he was most faithful and efficient. His religion burned as a pure flame of love; and he was "instant in season, out of season" to speak a word for God.

John Smith visited Ratoal, and was hospitably entertained by Mr. Armstrong. About twelve months subsequently, his son, George, then thirty years of age, was brought under the preaching of the Word to realize his guilt in the sight of God, and at a lovefeast was enabled to believe unto salvation. The spiritual change wrought by Divine grace in him soon became manifest to his friends in his holy walk and conversation. He maintained his integrity for nearly sixty years. To consistency of conduct was added active effort for the good of others and the glory of God. Most of his children were led to the Saviour through his instrumentality, and also some of his domestic servants, amongst whom were two Roman Catholics. Mr. Armstrong sustained the office of leader with acceptance and usefulness for nearly fifty years, and died at Clones in the full triumph of faith on 31st December, 1825.

Amongst others who at this period received the devoted itinerant were—Mr. Stacey, of Loughkillygreen; John Gregg, of Carrigans; Edward Bushel, of Corscreenagh; and Joseph Whitley, of Roosky. The last named especially appears to have been a man of enlarged mind and deep piety. He continued for a few years a burning and shining light, and in the prime of life was removed to the everlasting rest of God's people.

The first place in the county of Monaghan into which Methodism was introduced was Kilmore, and the agent was John Smith. It was the second place that he visited on entering the itinerancy. His labours were abundantly owned of

God in the salvation of souls. Among those awakened was a teacher of dancing, who, in the presence of those who received his instructions, ridiculed the idea of such an ignorant man as John Smith attempting to preach ; yet went the same evening to hear for himself. This resulted in his conversion to God. At one of the meetings here a woman was so deeply agitated in mind, and so convulsed in body, during the powerful prayer of Mr. Smith, that the people in the neighbourhood seriously consulted by what means they should put him to death. One man was so determined on destroying "that conjurer," as he called the preacher, that he sharpened a long clasp-knife, and having concealed himself among some bushes, close to the path on which he knew the itinerant would pass, confidently waited his opportunity ; and on peering through the branches to take a good aim he was suddenly seized with terror, the knife fell, and with trembling he came out of his hiding-place, confessed his diabolic purpose, and earnestly besought forgiveness. The faithful preacher, losing sight of his own narrow escape in the thought of the fearful danger of the sinner, replied : "Poor man ! let us go behind the hedge, and try if God will have mercy on you." They did so, and the Lord heard prayer, and transformed the murderer in intention into an humble Christian. Meanwhile the work at Kilmore prospered, until about seventy persons were received into the Society. Of this infant cause the leader was James Beatty, who was ardent in spirit, consistent in his life, and very useful.

In connection with the zealous labours of John Smith a large number of societies were formed in the county of Cavan, including those at Mullalougher, Killeshandra, Bawnboy, Belturbet, Cavanagh, Ballyconnell, Swanlinbar, Furnaceland, and Gortnaleg. One day as he travelled between Clones and Ballybay, seeing a man lying on the road-side asleep, he awoke him and found that he had been drunk, and had lain there all night, having spent all his money and parted with most of his clothes. John Smith brought before him earnestly the wickedness and danger of his course, and then prayed with him. As he pleaded with God, the poor inebriate wept in penitence of spirit. That man was John Bredin, a Roman Catholic schoolmaster, who

lived at Tullyvin, about three miles from Cootehill. He accompanied John Smith round the circuit, and soon obtained a sense of sins forgiven.

The young convert felt an earnest desire to lead others to a saving knowledge of Christ; and with this end visited Mrs. Maguire, of Mullalougher, whom he had previously known. He spoke to her of what the Lord had done for him, and his words sank deep into her heart. On leaving, he promised to return on the following Sabbath and pray with any persons that would be present; but before Sunday came the people of the neighbourhood tauntingly spoke of him as a Methodist, and Mr. Maguire refused to let him pray in the house. A poor neighbour, however, gave a hearty invitation to God's servant, and Mrs. Maguire went to hear him. Mr. Maguire following, to bring her back, arrived during prayer. He went in and wishing to escape observation, knelt down, and was deeply convinced of sin. When the young convert concluded his address to the throne of grace, Mr. Maguire went forward to him, in great distress, requested an interest in his prayers, and invited him to his house on the next Sabbath. Mr. Bredin went, and having sung and prayed, left a copy of the rules of the Society. During the following week John Smith preached twice on each of two days, at Mr. Maguire's to crowded congregations, and such was the influence which accompanied his preaching that thirty-three persons gave their names as willing to become members of the Methodist Society; among whom was Mrs. Maguire's "poor, aged, blind mother," who some time after was enabled to say: "I am seventy-seven years old, and was only born this day."

The struggling cause at Mullalougher met with much persecution; frequently the house of Mr. Maguire was surrounded during the services by wicked men, who caused much disturbance. On one occasion an unusually large number of these assembled, some of whom fired guns near the house, and others threw stones at the windows. At length the ringleader of the mob opened the door, and his attention was immediately arrested by the words: "Hark! how they clamour for His blood!" which the congregation were singing. He stopped, and the enquiry at once arose in his mind: "Am I clamouring for His blood?"

Those behind urged him to go in ; but he, with the cowardice of a guilty conscience, turning round ran off, pursued by his companions, who threatened to treat him worse than they intended to treat the preacher. The Methodists were frequently beaten, and in other ways ill-treated, but, owing to the interference of the civil authorities, at length obtained protection. During this period a farmer, named John Scott, opened his house at Mullalougher for preaching.

Once, as John Smith was about to ride through Swanlinbar, he observed a bridle-path, near the bridge, at the entrance to the village, leading to a hamlet at the foot of a hill, and determined in the strength of the Lord to turn aside and warn the people there of impending and everlasting misery. As he proceeded to carry out his intention, he heard, he narrates, a sudden noise like that of a violent whirlwind, and then a terrible voice shouting in his ears : " Go back, go back, thou old knave ! thou shalt do no good where thou intendest ; I will be there before thee." He firmly answered what he believed to be the devil : " Thou liest, Satan, thou enemy of Christ and His servants. In His might I will go, and fear neither thee nor all thy host." Animated thus by strong faith, and without any uneasy apprehension, he went on, alighted at the door of one of the houses, soon collected the people around him, sang a hymn, prayed, and preached ; and although at first some mocked, and all were astonished, soon the power of the Holy Ghost descended on the hearers, prompting the earnest cry for mercy, and enabling many to lay hold, in childlike confidence, on a present Saviour. A large class was formed, called the Furnaceland Society, amongst whom the work of God prospered.

On another day, as John Smith rode between Bawnboy and Swanlinbar, he saw two or three hundred persons on the side of a hill, some distance from the road, dancing, shouting, and in other ways amusing themselves. He stopped, earnestly prayed to God to give His blessing to His word, and rode into the midst of the crowd : upon which the fiddler ceased to play, and the people stared in wonder at the stranger, while he cried with stentorian and solemn voice : " O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord !" All were hushed into almost breathless silence, and he sang the hymn, " Behold the Saviour of

mankind," etc. The simple and pathetic story of redeeming love, accompanied by the power of the Spirit, reached the hearts of the hearers, many of whom wept before the servant of God had ceased to sing. He then dismounted, knelt, and poured out his soul to God in earnest prayer; and he had not pleaded many minutes when his strong voice was lost in the loud and bitter cries of those around him. Yet he continued on his knees more than an hour, agonizing in prayer on behalf of those just awakened to spiritual anxiety, till the Lord filled the hearts of more than twenty of them "with all joy and peace in believing." Here a society was formed of about forty persons.

Thus a blessed awakening took place, which extended over a large portion of the northwest of the county of Cavan, and part of Fermanagh. It was accompanied by numerous cases of physical prostration, and led to the conversion of hundreds.

Chapter XVIII.

1767.

AT the beginning of 1767 Mr. Johnson was at work in Londonderry, where the congregations kept up, and souls were saved; but in the middle of January he left for the metropolis, his place being supplied by Mr. Davis.

In Tyrone societies were formed in Castlecaulfield and Dungannon, by the preachers stationed on the Northeast round. For one quarter the collective salaries of these itinerants amounted to only nine pounds. At the March quarterly meeting it was resolved, "That from henceforth every member in each Society shall pay one penny every quarter to go towards defraying the extraordinary expenses of the round." This resolution was signed by R. Bourke, R. Williams, and T. Westell, the ministers of the circuit, and Thomas Ryan, the general steward. Mr. Wesley on his subsequent visit refers to the Society at Castlecaulfield, as "the first-fruits of the county," and to the members there as

being full of spiritual life. He also mentions the large congregations at Dungannon.

The good work very soon extended to other parts of Tyrone. John Smith seems to have been instrumental in forming a society in Aughnacloy, where Mr. Wesley preached in April. About this period Methodism was also introduced into the townland of Lislip, near Newtownstewart. At the solicitation of a poor but pious neighbour, Mr. John Gray invited to his house John Smith, to whom both he and his family became greatly attached. First the father, then each member of his family, as well as some of the servants, and many of the neighbours, were made partakers of the grace of God. This was the beginning of a new and happy era throughout the district. The wilderness and the solitary place became glad, and the desert began to rejoice and blossom as the rose. A class was formed, of which Mr. Gray was appointed the leader, and the little Christian band had great prosperity.

During the course of 1766, Mrs. Moore, whose husband was in the army, heard John Smith preach at Belturbet, and the Gospel as preached by him proved to be the power of God unto her salvation. She, with her husband, afterwards removed to the neighbourhood of Augher, where she invited the itinerant to preach. In February John Smith responded to her invitation, which introduced Methodism into that part of Tyrone. Amongst those present on this occasion was a Mr. James Smith, who then heard the word of life preached for the first time, and was convinced of sin, and of the necessity of giving his heart to the Lord. Under these impressions he invited the preacher to his house at Roughan, and from that time until his death in 1811, proved a liberal and hearty supporter of Methodism. About two months subsequent to John Smith's first sermon at Roughan, a class was formed by Mr. Thomas Brisco, of which James Smith was appointed the leader. This office he filled with acceptance for many years, being a man of deep piety, much power in prayer, and of that strong faith which looks for and obtains special blessings. At this early period he had to endure many trials and much persecution, on account of his religious profession ; but by Divine grace proved to be an example of meekness and uprightness, of zeal and persever-

ance. The quarterly meetings in that part of the circuit in which he lived were held in his house until a chapel was built. He died rejoicing in a bright and glorious hope of his heavenly inheritance.

Such was the generally favourable impression made by the labours of John Smith at Augher, that when Mr. Wesley visited the town in April, and preached in the castle-yard—the use of which was doubtless obtained by Mr. Moore—the congregations were both “large and deeply serious.”

At this period the Rev. Richard De Courcy visited the metropolis. He was a young clergyman, who from a child had been a member of the Society, and in connection with which had received the remission of sins. When in Dublin, passing through Trinity College, owing to the influence of some Calvinists, he had been led to believe that “there is no perfection,” and that “all things depend on absolute, unchangeable decrees,” and thus had become in some measure estranged from Methodism, and received deacon’s orders as curate to Mr. Shirley. Being invited to preach in St. Andrew’s church, his fame attracted a large congregation. But because he was reputed a Methodist, whilst the prayers were being read, the pulpit was seized by order of the metropolitan, Dr. F. A. Smyth, and De Courcy was forbidden to enter it. Upon this, having intimated that he would preach in the open air, he immediately left the church, the congregation followed him, and having mounted a tombstone, he at once carried out his intention. This was a crime too great to be forgiven; his diocesan, Dr. Cumberland, withdrew his license to preach, and refused to ordain him a priest. Mr. Shirley then wrote to Lady Huntingdon, and at her request De Courcy went to England, expecting with her help to obtain ordination by an English bishop. On arriving in London he immediately called on Mr. Whitefield, who, when told who his visitor was, took off his cap, saluted De Courcy, and placing his finger on a deep scar in his head, said, “Sir, this wound I got in your country for preaching Christ.” De Courcy was captivated, and became Whitefield’s guest. The next day, which was Sunday, he preached in Tottenham court road chapel, and by his sermon laid the foundation of his subsequent and great popularity.

On March 29th Mr. Wesley arrived at Donaghadee, and on the following day rode to Newtownards, where he preached in the market-house to a large number of serious people. He found to his joy that the Society, which had been shattered in pieces, was again united. At Lisburn he spent two or three days, and had many people of influence present at the services, and increasing congregations. He makes no reference to having administered the Lord's supper during this visit ; but there is a record of this, probably the first Methodist sacramental service in the north of Ireland. William Black says : " Mr. Wesley preached in the area of the Linen hall, from 'To-day is salvation come to this house.' He afterwards administered the Sacrament to about forty or fifty persons, nearly all the Methodists then in the counties of Down and Antrim. Whilst I received the Sacrament from his hands, I felt Christ precious to my soul to such a degree as I had never before experienced."

At Newry, when Wesley began his service in the market-house, he had only four hearers, but a good number assembled before he had closed ; none of the gentry, however, were present, " they were hindered by business of more importance, dressing for the assembly." It was while here he wrote his important sermon on "The Witness of the Spirit." At Tanderagee he had the largest congregation he had seen in Ulster, and on returning the preaching-house could not contain the people, so he went to the market-house. He records a sad example of the bitter hostility with which Methodism was regarded in certain quarters. A Seceding minister being asked if it were in his power would he cut the throats of all the Methodists, replied directly, " Why, did not Samuel hew Agag in pieces before the Lord ? "

At a place near Dawson's Grove Wesley preached to a large and serious congregation ; but in the evening to a much larger one at Kilmoriarty, where he was entertained by Mr. George Joyce, and where a mud-wall preaching-house was erected during the year. Of the people in these parts, he says, they have " in general the finest natural tempers I ever knew ; they have the softness and courtesy of the Irish, with the seriousness of the Scotch, and the openness of the English. At Portadown—" a place not troubled with any kind of religion"—Grange

and Cockhill, the people gathered from all sides, and when he prayed, rich and poor alike knelt down on the stones around him. At Clonmain, where were two and twenty Societies within a compass of ten miles, there were present at the service Mr. and Mrs. Russell, of the neighbouring city of Armagh. The latter had obtained a sense of pardon while attending meetings held by Methodist preachers at Athlone; and hearing of Mr. Wesley's intention to preach within a few miles of her residence, was most anxious to see and hear him; but her husband was unwilling that she should be identified with a sect which he considered disreputable. At length, by the advice of a friend, he consented, and resolved to accompany her that he might judge for himself. What he heard so completely removed his prejudices that, at the close of the service, he invited Mr. Wesley to stop at his house. The invitation was at once accepted, and an appointment made for preaching in the market-house of the primatial city on the following day. The father of Methodism, however, was not permitted by the sovereign of Armagh to use the public building. This prohibition led to a request from Mr. M'Geough, one of the chief merchants of this city, to preach in his avenue. Immediately after the service a class was formed, of which Mrs. Russell was a member.

The first preaching-place in Armagh was rented by Mrs. Russell, Mrs. Isabella Maxwell, and Mrs. Jane Justice. It was an humble edifice, situated in Thomas street, almost opposite the opening into Dobbin street; and consisted of a single room, fourteen feet long, and twelve wide, unceiled, with low walls, thatched roof, two small windows, and a little pulpit in one of the corners, raised but a single step above the level of the floor, which was all the elevation that the roof could afford. Yet, in fulfilment of His promise, God visited this lowly tabernacle, and refreshed His servants with tokens of His love.

At Londonderry Wesley found men of eminence in the city, who were both hearers and doers of the Word; and also that nearly all the members of the Society had tasted that the Lord is gracious. "Surely," he says, "this is an understanding people."

A little beyond Swanlinbar he had "a lively congregation

of plain, artless people," assembled from all the country round, including parts of Fermanagh. Next morning some of the chief persons of the town having desired he would preach to them there, he went thither. A large room was offered ; but it was quickly so full and so hot, that he was obliged to go out into the street, and had hardly announced his text, before a poor Romanist began blowing a horn. A gentleman, however, stepping up, snatched the horn, and without ceremony knocked him down. In the evening Wesley preached in the country again to a still larger congregation : and God made His Word quick and powerful. Many were wounded, and many comforted.

On one of these occasions, at least, Nehemiah and John Price, of Tonymonan, were present at the invitation of John Smith. The elder brother thus describes his impressions : " We found Mr. Wesley walking under some shady trees, in his gown and bands, and he appeared to me as a being of another world. In the course of the day he preached in a garden to a numerous and deeply attentive congregation. I was much affected by the solemn truths which I heard upon that occasion ; and resolved to forsake everything that I knew to be wrong, and earnestly to seek those blessed privileges which the Gospel holds forth to the awakened sinner."

On leaving Ulster Mr. Wesley thus states his impressions with regard to the work and the preachers in the province : " There is an amazing increase of the work of God within these few months, in the north of Ireland. And no wonder : for the five preachers who have laboured there are all men devoted to God—men of single eye, whose whole heart is in the work—' And constantly trample on pleasure and pain.' "

The part performed by John Smith, one of the five, during this the first year of his itinerancy, was certainly of no ordinary character, either in its nature or its results. To realize this, it should be remembered that the field was in many respects most unpromising ; it was very extensive, about sixty miles square, and the people amongst whom he laboured were in general poor, illiterate, and ignorant of the first principles of the Gospel. None can tell what he must have suffered from exposure and want in the early part of the year, when preaching places were

few. Often, like his Redeemer, he had not where to lay his head. And when doors of usefulness opened in all directions, still greater suffering awaited him from privations and persecutions; not to refer to the tremendous strain on his physical strength, arising from frequent and protracted services, at which he often continued speaking and singing for eight hours, almost without intermission. At times, for an entire week he scarcely rested day or night; in sunshine and shower, travelling over marshes and bogs, rocks and mountains, praying, preaching, and singing. But God had blessed him with a stalwart frame, a powerful voice, and a brave spirit, ever ready to "endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." During the greater part of the year he was left without a fellow labourer, there being only four other Methodist preachers stationed in Ulster: two in the Northwest, with Londonderry as their centre; and two in the Northeast, with Newry as their headquarters; while he was alone in the south. Mr. Wesley in the course of the spring sent two additional preachers to the province: one to the Northeast, and the other to assist John Smith. No connected history of the glorious work which took place was written by the only person who was familiar with all its details, and no one else ever attempted it. Incidental allusions are all that are available now; but even from these it is evident that, notwithstanding the almost insuperable difficulties John Smith had to contend with, the success which crowned his labours has been rarely surpassed. There could not have been fewer than five hundred souls converted to God by his ministry during the year. Many of these probably did not identify themselves with Methodism. Possibly in part from his lack of education, but chiefly from the want of persons of experience qualified to watch over and instruct the young converts, the work of organization was left very much to the preachers who immediately succeeded him. But if some of those brought to the Saviour were lost to Methodism, they were a blessing to the respective churches with which they were connected. Arrangements were made, however, in thirty-six places for the young converts and the anxious inquirers to meet together for fellowship and prayer; and thus Societies were commenced, which subsequently were duly constituted.

But to return to Mr. Wesley. On May 1st he arrived at Sligo, where he was the guest of Mr. Andrew Maiben, a leading merchant in the town, who had become a Methodist about twelve months previously. Here there was a decided improvement in the state of the Society, the congregations were larger and more attentive than before, and there were manifest tokens that the Divine blessing had accompanied the labours of Samuel Levick, a young man from Sheffield, of genuine piety and much zeal, who was stationed on the circuit.

Wesley then rode to Castlebar, where many attended the services, and "the power of the Lord was present to heal." At Newport rich and poor seemed almost persuaded to be Christians. Having preached in the Courthouse, Ballinrobe, and in Galway, where Colonel Eyre and his family were present, he rode to Ennis, but found the services had been discontinued and the Society had dwindled away. At Limerick he was grieved at the smallness of the congregations and the general languor which seemed to have spread among the members. "Almost throughout the province of Ulster," he says, "I found the work of God increasing; and not a little in Connaught, particularly at Sligo, Castlebar and Galway. But in Munster, a land flowing with milk and honey, how widely is the case altered! At Ennis the god of this world has wholly prevailed; at Clare there is but a spark left; and at Limerick itself I found only the remains of the fire, which was kindled two years ago." So to revive and extend the work, as soon as the weather was suitable, he took his old stand in the Camp, where the congregations were very large and the people much blessed. At Ballingarrane he preached to those who were left of the poor Palatines, and at Shronell to the largest congregation he had ever seen there. During the service at Kilfinnane, a young man who ought to have been a gentleman, endeavoured to make a disturbance, and when mildly expostulated with by Mr. Dancer, who had been received on trial at the previous Conference, he replied with a volley of oaths and a blow. One of the townspeople then took the young rowdy in hands, and beat him well, while the preacher retired a few hundred yards, and quietly finished his discourse.

At Bandon the weather was so severe that Wesley had to

confine his public labours to the preaching-house, which, when the benches were removed, held the greater part of the congregations, those who could not get in being able to hear at the door and windows. In the Cork Society he found a sad declension. Two years before there were three hundred members in the Society, but now there were only one hundred and eighty-seven. Misunderstandings had crept in between the leaders, and between some of them and the preachers. These increased sevenfold, when one the leaders was expelled from the Society, some believed him to be faulty, which others denied, and neither party had patience with the other. Hence a flame of anger succeeded the flame of love, and many were destroyed by it. At the same time "some of the brethren learned a new opinion and warmly propagated it," which led to further disagreement, and was almost as destructive as the former: the natural result being, that the Spirit of God was grieved and the flock scattered. When the weather permitted Wesley preached in the open air—once at Blackpool to a large number of quiet hearers, and again in George street, to such a congregation as that in the old Camp, Limerick, when a solemn awe prevailed over the whole assembly. At Youghal the good work which obtained two years previously had long ceased, for there had been scarcely any preaching in the meantime. Observing the number and deep attention of his hearers, Wesley prolonged his stay, and his congregations were much increased. At Waterford there appeared to be "a small, poor, dead society, and but a handful of dull and careless hearers;" but on preaching to them he saw more life than he had expected, and when he met the Society, found that some of them seemed much devoted to God. Mr. Morgan also preached, the Lord gave him acceptable words, and the whole congregation, rich and poor, appeared to be greatly moved. The audience in the Town hall, Kilkenny, was large and tolerably serious, a few of the gentry excepted, "who seemed neither to understand nor care for any of these things."

At Birr Wesley preached to one of the wildest congregations he had seen; but as he stood near the Barracks the people were kept in awe by the soldiers, until the whole body

of Romanists ran away together, and the rest of the congregation became exceedingly serious. For many years he had not seen so large an audience at Aughrim as this year, and one so remarkably well conducted. At Athlone he preached in a new chapel, which had been built by Mr. S. Simpson, J.P., in his own garden and at his own expense, with a room over the end of it for the accommodation of the preachers. Referring to the generous liberality of this gentleman, in connection with that of Mr. Jones of Cork, and Mr. Lunell of Dublin, Wesley says : he knew of no such benefactors among the Methodists of England. He remained in the town for four or five days, preaching morning and evening to large and serious congregations, amongst whom were many that loved and served God. On Sunday he would have gone to church, but was informed there had been no service there for nearly two years, and there would be none for a year or two longer, as the inside of the building needed repairs ! While here he wrote a long letter to his brother Charles, giving his impressions with regard to the work in general, in which he says in reference to his itinerants : " Richard Bourke, John Dillon, and one or two more in this kingdom are truly devoted men, so are a few of the preachers in England. *Si sic omnes !* What would be able to stand before them ? "

At Clara Wesley discoursed in the Market-place, and was impressed by the seriousness of the whole congregation. Having preached in Tullamore and Mountmellick, and finding in the latter that some of the most earnest persons in the Society were deeply prejudiced against each other, he laboured much to remove the ill-feeling ; but perceiving that both argument and entreaty were in vain, he had recourse to prayer, when the mighty power of God descended, all wrath and bitterness at once ceased, and the disputants burst into tears and fell on each others' necks. Finding the congregation in the Market-house, Portarlinton, had " neither sense nor good manners," he adjourned to the shell of the new chapel, in which the audience, both Catholics and Protestants, behaved with decency. At Coolalough he preached at noon, and then presided over the quarterly meeting, where, he says, he found no reason to complain of any of the Societies, only they needed

more life and zeal. At Mullingar, where for many years no Methodist could preach, the commanding officer not only gave Wesley the use of the session-house, but also himself attended the meeting, with many of the soldiers and townspeople.

Having remained for a few days in Dublin, during which at the public services the chapel was "thoroughly filled," and it seemed as if the windows of heaven were opened, the Spirit of grace and supplication was so abundantly poured out, Wesley preached at Donard, Baltinglass, and Carlow to large audiences, and then returned to the metropolis.

On June 27th there appeared in the *Dublin Mercury* an anonymous letter, said to have been written by an Episcopal clergyman, and affording a striking example of the opposition the preachers had to contend with. In this epistle gross and barefaced untruths are retailed in language fit only for Billingsgate—"Cursed gospel gossip," "sanctified devils," and "scoundrels, canting, hypocritical villains" are some of the flowers which are strewn abroad with no sparing hand. On July 11th Mr. Wesley replied in the *Freeman's Journal* repudiating the statements made, and calling on the writer to give his name, or all candid men would believe the whole letter to be senseless and harmless slander.

The Conference met on the 22nd and 23rd of July. For the first time a return of the members of Society was made for publication, the total in Ireland being two thousand eight hundred and one. Instead of four preachers being appointed to Ulster, as at the previous English Conference, seven were now sent. The two rounds were retained, but their limits enlarged and their names changed. The entire province was thus divided into two vast circuits, which might appropriately have been designated the Northwest and Southeast. The circuit of which Castlebar was the head, including the counties of Mayo, Leitrim, Roscommon and Sligo, also received an additional preacher.

The day after Conference was set apart for fasting and prayer, and concluded with a public service in Whitefriars street chapel, which continued until after midnight; and was conducted by Mr. Wesley, who says it was the most solemn Watchnight he remembered in Ireland. On July 29th he

embarked at Donaghadee for Scotland, having spent just four months in Ireland.

John Helton and Thomas Olivers were appointed to Dublin. Mr. Olivers says, the Lord began to bless his labours as soon as he arrived. A considerable number were awakened, and others received a sense of the favour of God. But Mr. Morgan having come to the circuit, differences of opinion arose with regard to the spirit and deportment which should characterize Christians, and also in reference to the exercise of discipline. This not only marred the good work, but also engendered a party spirit which proved the origin of many painful and pernicious disputes in the Society during subsequent years.

The devoted William Penington, who had married Miss Teare, and the brave and zealous Robert Williams—the first Methodist itinerant who laboured in America—were sent to the Castlebar circuit. It took them six weeks each to go the round, and the preaching places were so far apart that in one case, after riding an entire day, the preachers were obliged to stay at a public-house, and continue their journey next morning, and then only reached their destination towards evening. The Assistant was with his family only three days in six weeks, and there was no residence provided, or allowance made for his family. The severe toil and exposure to the weather proved too much for Mr. Penington, and brought on an attack of fever, which cut short his useful life, only a few months after his arrival on the circuit.

When John Smith went to the Armagh round to which he was appointed, he found many people whose profession and practice did not agree, and strongly condemned them. At first they did not care for the faithful preacher, but soon saw he desired their real welfare, and entered heartily into his work. There was then a blessed revival, many were convinced and converted, and backsliders were restored; numerous openings also were obtained for proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation.

About this time Methodism was introduced into Derryanvil, a place described by Mr. Wesley as "a little village out of all road, surrounded with bogs, just like my old parish of Wroote, in Lincolnshire." The wife of Mr. Robert Johnson, residing

here while on a visit with some relatives in the county of Meath, who had become Methodists, was strongly impressed with the change she witnessed, and became concerned for her own salvation and that of her family and friends. She invited a Mr. Doolittle, a local preacher, to visit her, and he came no less than seventy miles to declare in that neighbourhood "the unsearchable riches of Christ." His sojourn at Derryanvil was brief, but much owned of God; and to this day "Mother Ailse" (Alice) is spoken of with respect and gratitude as having been the first to bring a Methodist preacher to the neighbourhood. Mr. James Matchett heard the Gospel preached by one of the itinerants, and it proved the power of God unto his salvation. When a class was formed he was appointed the leader. Through his instrumentality Thomas Jones was induced to attend the services, became impressed with the truth, and was led to decide for God. He opened his house for the preachers, and for upwards of thirty years walked in the unclouded light of his heavenly Father's countenance. He was a man of strict integrity, and of a warm and genial spirit.

A local preacher named John M'Neese, who in 1769 entered the itinerancy, when visiting a person in affliction at Killyman, announced his intention to preach, and a large congregation attended. Amongst those present was a young man named Robert Miller, who was brought to feel his need of salvation. Soon after this young man's uncle, Mr. Boardtree, invited John Smith to his house to preach, when he gave to the inquirer such counsel and encouragement as he needed, commending him to the Divine blessing in earnest prayer, and receiving him as a member of the Society. At length Robert obtained the assurance of the Divine favour: and, returning home with a heart overflowing with love to Christ, proved the means of leading one of his cousins to the Saviour, and she became a consistent and attached member of the Society. Robert, two years later, was appointed the leader of a class at Derryhirk, where he was made instrumental in the conversion of many souls.

At this time a Mr. and Mrs. Horner occupied a farm on the shores of Strangford Lough: they were Presbyterians, and instructed their children in moral and religious

principles. One of their sons, William, went to hear John Smith preach, and through his powerful ministry was brought under deep conviction of sin, and, seeking the Lord in His appointed way, was not suffered to wait long until he obtained a sense of sins forgiven. He became a Methodist, but his parents strongly disapproved of his connection with this novel sect, and gave him one night to consider whether he would renounce his new associates, or be expelled from home ; but, he, with a clear, strong conviction of duty, promptly replied : " Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up." The threat, however, was not executed, and he had ultimately the satisfaction of knowing that both his parents were converted to God. Several of the family also became the subjects of converting grace, and joined the Society. William at once engaged in work for his Redeemer, outside the domestic circle as well as within it, and with such acceptance and success that in September, 1769, he was summoned by Mr. Wesley to supply the place of one of the preachers who had retired from the work on the Enniskillen circuit. After having travelled eight years in his native country, he was removed to England, where he continued to itinerate until 1819, when through age and infirmity he was compelled to retire from the active work. Seven years later he fell asleep in Jesus.

At Markethill J. Smith found an opening for preaching the Gospel, and was instrumental in leading several to the Saviour, and thus of forming a society. There were present several from this little town, when he held the quarterly meeting at Tanderagee. At the close of the service, after supper, he spoke strongly to the people, and they were deeply affected. He then had recourse to the throne of grace, and they continued in prayer all night. Early in November thirty new members had been added to the Society, and at the close of the year the faithful evangelist could number no less than forty-two who had received the forgiveness of sins during his labours on the circuit.

Chapter XXX.

1768.

At the last Conference Mr. Dillon was appointed to the Augher circuit, with Messrs. Murray and Thomas, and he succeeded in forming the Societies into classes, and arranging a regular plan of preaching appointments. He also visited several new places, extending as well as consolidating the good work. Societies were formed at Aughrim and Old Cleens in Magheraboy. Mr. John Maguire received the preachers at the former, and two or three old widows entertained them at the latter place.

The good seed was carried at this period through various parts of the country to Randalshough, where Richard Fallis was led to embrace salvation by faith. He opened his house for preaching, and evinced through life the spirit of Him who is "meek and lowly in heart." In Inisway and Cosbystown Societies were formed, after these townlands had been visited several times by the preachers. One of the first-fruits of the ministry here was Prudence Deane, a young woman of humble circumstances who, by her holiness and stability of character, exercised a considerable influence for good in the neighbourhood. Her piety commanded the respect of even the most thoughtless. At an advanced age she died happy in God.

Another opening obtained was in the house of Mr. John Moffett, at Carrickcroghery, or Mountain Top, in the parish of Drumkeeran, which was then the only preaching place between Tonymolan and Lislip, and was subsequently the scene of many blessed visitations of Divine power and grace.

On February 14th, 1768, Mr. Dillon wrote to Mr. Wesley giving an account of his work, and the numerous privations he had to suffer, no doubt in common with many others of the early preachers. The field was most laborious, the houses in which he stopped in general but ill protected from either cold or rain, the beds damp, and the fare of the humblest descrip-

tion. Under these circumstances he writes : " I am given to see clearly that the business of a preacher of the Gospel is not to mind (though he cannot do without them) what he shall eat or drink, or how he shall lie, &c., but how he shall save souls, and for that end become all things to all men, so he may gain some. I find a great desire to go to new places where the Gospel has not been preached ; but am almost continually in danger of having my brains beat out."

Some time previously he was brought by a clergyman before the Provost of Enniskillen for preaching. There were one or two others of the clergy present, as well as a number of ladies, and his examination continued for nearly three hours. At length one of the ministers, Mr. Skelton, took him by the hand, and wishing him God-speed, said : " If you are the real servants of God, sent forth to convert the world, I wish myself, with all my brethren who oppose you, seven feet under ground."

At length the unremitting and self-denying labours of Mr. Dillon proved too much for his strength, and in April he was seized with fever. The house in which he happened to be was situated on the side of a mountain, very bleak and cold, and consisting of but one room eighteen feet long and twelve wide, in which husband, wife, five small children, and two servants slept ; and here the afflicted servant of God lay for nearly six weeks. The people were exceedingly kind, and let him want for nothing that was in their power, and the Lord cheered him with His presence and blessing, so that this humble cabin proved a little Bethel to his soul. His colleagues also being laid aside, he attempted too soon to supply the lack of service, and thus so injured his constitution that he never regained his former strength and vigour.

At this time Mr. Morgan was stationed in Athlone, where as usual he drew large congregations. Amongst others attracted by the fame of the preacher was the Rev. Henry Goldsmith, brother of the poet. He held the curacy of Kilkenny West, to which was attached the moderate stipend of forty pounds a year, celebrated in Oliver's familiar lines ; and also had a school at Lissoy. Here his talents and industry gave it celebrity, and under his care the sons of many of the neighbouring gentry received their education. A fever having broken out among the boys,

they dispersed for a time, but re-assembling at Athlone, he resumed his scholastic labours. He was just the amiable person so beautifully described in "The Deserted Village," but like most of the clergy of that day was a stranger to experimental religion, regarding its profession as enthusiasm. As he seemed much pleased with the Methodist service, one of the members of the Society invited him to meet Mr. Morgan at her house for tea on the following evening. In the course of conversation Mr. Goldsmith made numerous inquiries concerning Mr. Morgan's views, and proposed some objections, which were answered so much to his satisfaction that he said there was but one other point which he wished to have cleared up; but as it was time to go to the public service, he would wait another opportunity. He listened with deep interest to the sermon, and at the close of the meeting, having stopped to speak to Mr. Morgan, told him that the discourse had completely cleared up the point in question, so that his mind was entirely satisfied. The next day Mr. Morgan went to some other place on the circuit, and it was six weeks before he again returned to the town; but in the interval Mr. Goldsmith was seized with a violent fever, which soon proved fatal. There was reason to believe that a gracious change had passed on his mind, so deep was the impression made that even in his delirium he would frequently address Mr. Morgan as if he was present. The dying curate seemed full of love and praise.

In the meantime the preachers on the Augher circuit having broken down, Mr. Wesley sent Hugh Saunderson, a young man from England, as a supply, and he entered with much zeal into his work.

The part of Fermanagh extending from Ballinamallard to Enniskillen was at this time inhabited chiefly by Protestant farmers in easy circumstances, but in general ignorant and careless as to spiritual things. Although the classes for religious instruction, and the faithful preaching of the Rev. Philip Skelton, rector of Devenish and Trory, 1759-66, had, it is true, alarmed the fears and raised the moral tone of many, who were thus led to think seriously, yet that able and laborious divine not having clear views of the method of a sinner's justification, few, if any, received the forgiveness of sins. They

sought to be justified by the works of the law, and not by the faith of Jesus Christ. A brighter day, however, was about to dawn on the Church in this neighbourhood.

Mr. Saunderson preached near a farmhouse in the townland of Salry, about five miles north of Enniskillen, and at the close of the service said that if any of the hearers would give him lodging, he would remain and preach again. Mr. William Armstrong, of Sidaire, was present with several of his family; his daughter Mary was deeply impressed with what she had heard, and, yielding to her persuasions, her father invited Mr. Saunderson to his house, where, to the present day, the preachers have found a most hospitable welcome and a comfortable home. Soon after this Thomas Halliday and John Smith visited the neighbourhood. Notwithstanding severe persecution, their ministry was a blessing to great numbers. Mr. Armstrong's son John and two daughters soon experienced the saving power of Divine grace. Mary, who was blind, continued to live with her brother, a holy, happy follower of the Lord, till she exchanged mortality for life. Nancy was subsequently married to her cousin, William Armstrong, of Drumbulcan, who had also been converted. He was a man of sound understanding and great energy, and for many years was a highly acceptable and useful local preacher, much esteemed and beloved in the neighbourhood. John Armstrong was a man of artless simplicity, not possessing much talent, but pious, and very efficient as a class-leader.

The preachers also extended the field of their labours in this neighbourhood, so that Societies were formed at Knockmanoul, Irvinestown and other places, and many were converted to God. In holding meetings they were well sustained by some of the young converts. Thus Nehemiah Price, of Tonymolan, William Little, of Lissan, near Tempo, and others, were in the habit of visiting and preaching at these places. At Knockmanoul the servants of God were received by William Graham, and the class there, strangely enough, was long called Molly Gregg's, that being the maiden name of his wife. Amongst those then brought to the saving knowledge of the truth were Mrs. Noble, of Kilgortnaleague, and seven of her daughters.

The earnest efforts of the members to extend the Redeemer's kingdom soon led to an interruption of their peace. A young man in the neighbourhood became the ringleader of the persecutors of the Methodists, and cruelly maltreated all who came within his reach, not sparing even his aged mother, whom he dragged out of one of the meetings, beating all who dared to interfere with his brutality. Once, during the service at Knockmanoul he collected a mob of about one hundred persons, called loudly for his mother and sisters, and began to belabour those about the door, breaking the jawbone of George Magee.* Some members of the Magee family, who were present, with two or three others, seeing what was done, at once sallied out unarmed, deprived a number of the rioters of their weapons, and so utterly routed and terrified their assailants that the very presence of a Magee became a guarantee for the quiet of a congregation.

One Sunday afternoon the wild youth mentioned above broke into Mr. Armstrong's house at Sidaire, where a prayer-meeting was being held, struck several with a loaded whip, and severely beat Nancy Armstrong, whom he accused of making his sister a Methodist, leaving the poor girl on the floor apparently dead. From the effect of this cruel treatment she never completely recovered.

On another occasion this young man, with some of his companions, violently seized John Smith, had him carried to an unfathomable spring, called the Lough of the Bog, and intended to drown him there; but they discovered that the preacher had been a Freemason, and being themselves connected with the craft, they not only gave up their diabolic purpose, but also permitted John Smith to travel through the country unmolested during the remainder of the year.

It, however, soon became manifest that the cruel persecutor, with all his loud talk and dauntlessness in beating those who made no resistance, was at heart a coward. William Little, of Lissan, went to conduct a service at Sidaire. He was a young man of great physical strength, who believed that his powerful arm was given to be used against the enemies

* A cousin of Dr. William Magee, Archbishop of Dublin, who was a native of Fermanagh.

of the Gospel, and concerning whose feats numerous traditions are to be found. During the sermon the bold youth entered with his head covered. The preacher quietly requested him to take off his hat, which he insolently refused to do. Then, knowing the character of the man, William Little went forward, horsewhip in hand, took off the hat himself, reminded the persecutor of his former base and cruel acts, told him that he had not come there to be murdered, and threatened to give him a good thrashing if he did not promise to change his course. The youth not only gave the required pledge, but also undertook to use his influence to put a stop to the persecution which had existed in the neighbourhood.

But meantime opposition had arisen in another quarter. Several of the younger members of the Henderson family, at Drumbulcan, having become Methodists, were very harshly treated by their parents. They were locked up in their rooms, received but little food, and were severely beaten; yet persisted in attending the services. Miss Henderson was obliged to leave home for a time, and retire to the house of Mr. Little, near Florence Court. Her father brought a clergyman to reason with her, who failed to move the young convert. Then a mob was collected on a Saturday evening, during the service at Mr. Armstrong's, of Sidaire, with the intention of seizing and driving out of the neighbourhood the two preachers who were there. The family and congregation having received notice of the approach of their assailants, strongly barricaded the doors and windows. The Hendersons and their followers surrounded the house, erected a number of tents, and for two or three successive days and nights continued the blockade, being determined to starve the besieged into compliance with their terms. At length a gentleman in the neighbourhood interfered, and having obtained an interview with the preachers at the parlour window, and ascertained that they were licensed, he represented to those outside that they were acting contrary to the law, and rendering themselves liable to severe punishment. He then proposed to raise the siege on condition that the preachers would forgive the past, if they were not interrupted in future. The conditions being mutually agreed to, this conflict ended.

Most of the young women who suffered so severely during these persecutions were subsequently married to respectable members of the Methodist Society in different parts of the country, and their children occupied honourable and useful positions in the Church. Miss Henderson's family were induced to attend the preaching of the Word, several, if not all, were brought into the Society, and she had the heartfelt satisfaction of seeing them walking in the ways of the Lord.

John Smith seems to have found an opportunity of proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation at Charlemont, where he formed into a society those who had been quickened into spiritual life. There was no one living there at the time qualified to take charge of those thus converted, but God in His providence soon sent one specially adapted for this work. In August Mr. Samuel Bates, a native of Yorkshire, of eminent piety and usefulness, settled in the town, where he not only devoted his Sabbaths to the service of God, but generally spent his week evenings also in preaching the word of life in the adjacent country. Through his instrumentality many obtained the forgiveness of sins.

One evening while Mr. Bates was conducting a service a young man who had been notoriously wicked came in, and throwing himself down began to confess his sins. After much entreaty he was prevailed upon to rise, but his distress was so great that he refused all comfort. Next day his friends reported that he was mad, and had him shut up in confinement and bound with a strong chain. On being visited by a minister he made such a confession of his numerous crimes as led the visitor to believe that he really was insane: for, said he, no man in his senses would confess such horrid deeds. Mr. Bates, however, called to see him, told him of the power of Christ to forgive sins, and encouraged him to believe on the Lord Jesus. Prayer also was made without ceasing on his behalf, until at length the Lord was pleased to send a peaceful answer down, and such a gracious change passed upon him as convinced his friends that they had mistaken his case, and he was set at liberty. A profound impression was thus made on the minds of many who were constrained to own the hand of God.

One of the preachers on the Augher circuit, most likely John Smith, on his way from Tonymolan to Londonderry, stopped at Magheralough, near Trillick, where he was entertained by Mr. G. Irvine ; and also at another townland of the same name near Derg bridge,* at both of which he ministered the word of life. The Lord gave His blessing with His word, especially at the latter place, and a gracious work then commenced, which resulted in the turning of many from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, who both in the public ministry and in more limited spheres of usefulness adorned the doctrine of God our Saviour. Amongst those converted was Mrs. Margaret Johnston, of Lisleen, who was for several years a " Mother in Israel." The Methodist chapel now in use occupies a site close to where her residence stood.

On one occasion John Smith preached in the open air at Drumquin, and at the close of the service inquired if any person was willing to receive him, and afford an opportunity of proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation. Amongst his hearers were a Mr. and a Mrs. Smith, who invited him to their dwelling at Cavandarragh. The invitation was gladly accepted, and led to the conversion of both host and hostess, who became members of the Society. Mrs. Smith was a woman of deep piety, and for many years enjoyed the blessing of perfect love. Her two sons, Robert and James, entered the itinerancy and were useful preachers.

On another occasion as John Smith was riding near Drumquin, two respectable men on horseback overtook him, who having saluted him, inquired where he came from, and whither he went ; he answered, " I have come from the city of destruction, and am journeying to the celestial city." But they did not understand him, so he proceeded without delay to bring before them man's guilt, and the atonement of Christ as the only and all-sufficient means of redemption. They heard with attention, and were so deeply impressed with the solemn truths brought before them, that they requested him to accompany them, and he remained with them two or three days, during which both found peace with God, and others in their

* Now called Castlederg.

houses and neighbourhood being sincerely impressed, a society was formed. It is exceedingly probable that these two men were William Finlay and Samuel Steele, as they both were converted at this time, were warm friends, and lived on the townland of Magheracoltan. William Finlay was a class leader for half-a-century, and for upwards of twenty years efficiently filled the office of steward on the Londonderry circuit. The Wesleyan ministers regularly preached in his house. He was an excellent and exemplary man: his children and his children's children have been partakers of "like precious faith," and have maintained their attachment to Methodism both at home and in the colonies. Mr. Samuel Steele, father of the Rev. S. Steele, one of the ablest preachers Irish Methodism ever produced, was also a most devoted and useful man, and for about sixty years held the office of class leader.

At Lisburn the good cause prospered. Frank Cumberland returned from England, where he had resided for two years, and came home full of fire and zeal. He informed Mr. Black of the surprising manner in which the work had been carried on where he had been by means of prayer-meetings, and asked him to unite with him in similar Christian efforts. Meetings then were held in different parts of the town, the Lord was powerfully present, souls were converted, and one or two new classes formed. The services at five o'clock in the morning were also much blessed.

While thus Methodism was making rapid progress in Ulster, in the south of Ireland the cause seemed to languish. In Dublin Mr. Taylor who had charge of the circuit, was in great hopes that by a faithful attention to discipline, harmony would be restored; but he was disappointed. His former opponent, Mr. Morgan, came to the city, and continued there, notwithstanding the strong remonstrance of Mr. Wesley. Mr. Johnson, also, who had settled in the city as a supernumerary, strongly sympathized with, and encouraged the dissentients, making serious and most improper reflections on Mr. Wesley and the preachers, and thus the breach was widened and discord increased.

On the Cork circuit, also, much improvement does not

appear to have taken place. On August 6th Mr. Wesley wrote to Mr. Mason, saying: "I would advise you to make a longer trial of Kinsale. I am still in hope that good will be done there, and there has been considerable good done at Bandon, and will be more if the preachers do not coop themselves up in the house. But no great good will be done at any place without field-preaching." And again, on November 15th: "For one preacher to stay long at one place is neither profitable for him nor for the people. If there is only one preacher at Limerick he must duly visit the country Societies. As David Evans is now gone on to Waterford, brother Bourke will be at liberty; so either he or you should go without delay, and relieve John Helton at Londonderry. If any deny the witness of sanctification, and occasion disputing in the select Society, let him or her meet therein no more."

Chapter XX.

1769.

THE openings for preaching on the Augher circuit were so numerous, and the success which attended the ministry of the word so marked, that a young man named George Snowden, who at the following Conference was received on trial, was sent to assist in the good work. He preached in the market-house of Clones in February. On this occasion James Boyle was present, and was deeply impressed with the truths to which he then listened for the first time. Soon after John Smith came to the town and preached, and the young man was again a hearer. At the close of the service the evangelist announced that he would hold a meeting at five o'clock on the following morning, remarking that he would then know who were on the Lord's side. James Boyle before retiring to rest prayed that if it were the Lord's will that he should become a Methodist, he might awake at the time appointed; he did so, went to the preaching, and was deeply convinced of sin, although two years elapsed before he was enabled to rejoice in the unclouded sense of the Divine favour.

On March 22nd Mr. Wesley arrived at Dublin, where for three days he laboured to allay the ferment in the Society. He heard the preachers face to face, and endeavoured to remove their misunderstandings with, at least, some degree of success ; but still a jealousy remained, without the entire removal of which there could be no cordial agreement. On visiting the classes the results of his observation were—1. That out of five hundred members he had left here, only four hundred and fifty remained. 2. That nearly half of the believers had given up their faith. 3. That the rest were more established than ever, and some rapidly growing in grace. “ So that, considering the heavy storms they had gone through, if there was any cause of humiliation on the one hand, there was on the other more abundant cause of thankfulness to Him, who saved so many when all the waves went over them.” At this time, also, death made large havoc in the Societies in Ireland as well as England. Just as Wesley left Dublin, four or five members there were taken away in as many days. They all witnessed a good confession and died in full assurance of hope. One especially, Nancy Rogers, breathed a very Christ-like spirit.

On April 3rd Wesley set out for the provinces. At Newry, owing to the intense cold the congregation in the market-house was but small. On the next evening however it was considerably increased, and after the public service he requested the Society to meet him in the preaching room, where the Sacrament of the Lord's supper was administered. At Terryhoogan he preached with much enlargement of heart in a tent which the people had made for his protection from the north wind. At Lisburn, although still piercingly cold, it did not hinder a multitude of people from attending the service in the Linen hall. As the market-house in Belfast was pre-engaged, he took his stand in the street, which proved the means of doubling the congregation ; but many of them had no ears to hear, being faithful followers of Dr. Taylor. This being the time of the quarter sessions at Carrickfergus, it greatly increased the audience, many of whom seemed deeply affected. At Newtownards all the gentlemen of the town were present. And at Tanderagee there was one of the liveliest congregations in the kingdom.

Having preached at Dawson's Grove and Kilmoriarty, Wesley came to Derryanvil, where the congregation was large and exceedingly lively. He spoke to many in this neighbourhood "who professed to have been saved from all sin, and found every reason to believe them." At Cockhill there was a listening multitude. At Armagh he preached several times to serious audiences until the weather compelled him to retire under cover; and then, for the first time in his life, preached in a stable, and he believed more good was done then than at all the other services he had held in the city. At Kinnard or Caledon, where a little society had been formed, which was much alive to God, he met an old acquaintance, Archdeacon Congreve, with whom he had probably associated at Oxford, who received him with the most cordial affection, and at whose request he opened a new church which had just been built. At Charlemont he preached to a very large and serious congregation, at Castlecaulfield, to a plain people who retained all their earnestness and simplicity, and at Cookstown to most of the inhabitants of the place.

At Londonderry, where a large and durable chapel had been built during the year in Magazine street, there was as usual a full house, but Wesley, although admitting that the congregations were brilliant, says that while in no other place in Ireland had more labour been expended by the ablest of the preachers, yet the Society was small and in general cold and heartless. He preached at New Buildings "to a civil, careless congregation," and again to a very large audience who were all attention. Having spent more than a week in Londonderry he arrived at Augher faint and weary, after a long ride on an extremely hot day. His physical exhaustion evidently prevented his enjoyment of the service there, so nothing is stated by him as to the spiritual condition of the Society. Having been refreshed, however, by a good night's sleep, he proceeded to Sidaire for the first time, and here he saw such manifest tokens of the work of the Holy Spirit, and realized so much of the presence and power of God, that he was constrained to continue in prayer for a longer time than he had done for years. On the following day at noon he preached in Enniskillen, where at that time there was no Society, but

where he had "a large number of hearers, some civil, some rude, and almost all totally unaffected." He then rode to Tonyloman, where he found a congregation after his own heart. "Great part of them knew in whom they had believed; all were deeply and steadily attentive; and many were thoroughly convinced of inbred sin and groaning for full redemption." On the day following he went to Swanlinbar, and found here "as artless, earnest and loving a people as even at Tonyloman," and when he preached "the very Papists appeared as attentive as the Protestants."

On May the 5th Wesley arrived at Manorhamilton, where he says there was a general love for the Gospel until simple R. Williams preached against the clergy. The itinerant thus condemned was withal a brave and devoted man, albeit he was no admirer of the Episcopal clergy. Tidings had come to Ireland of Embury's success in America, and Williams spoke to Wesley offering to go there, and asking his sanction and authority, which were given with the understanding that he was to labour in subordination to the missionaries who were about to be sent out. Williams was poor, and unable to meet the expense of the voyage, so he wrote to Mr. Ashton, a Methodist in Dublin, and persuaded him to emigrate with him and pay his passage. Hearing that his friend was ready to leave, Williams hastily left Castlebar, sold his horse to defray his debts and pay his way to the metropolis, and carrying his saddle-bags on his arm, set off with a loaf of bread, a bottle of milk, and an empty purse. Ashton met him according to promise, and cheerfully paid his passage. They arrived in New York in August, two months at least before Boardman and Pilmoor. Thus Ireland lost Robert Williams, and America gained him who proved to be "the Apostle of Methodism" in Virginia and North Carolina, and the spiritual father of thousands.

But to return to Wesley. At Sligo, the congregation was large and tolerably quiet; but strange to tell, in dwelling on salvation by faith, he says, he was shooting over the heads of the people, so he subsequently took for his text, "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched," and with more effect. Verily, the preaching in which the evil of sin is over-

looked, and its terrible consequences ignored, so common now-a-days, would have made little impression on the sturdy transgressors of those times. At Castlebar he dined with Sir Charles Bingham, M.P., and at the request of his host preached in the hall of his mansion. At Galway the service was held in the Sessions-house, where were hearers of every sort ; all were silent and tolerably civil, and some appeared to be a little affected.

At Limerick Wesley was much shocked at the smallness of the congregation in the chapel, but found the audience at the old Camp larger than it had been for several years ; yet still he observed no signs of spiritual life until the watch-night service, when the Lord touched the hearts of the people, and the good work continued to deepen and spread. Having preached at Ballingarrane, Newmarket, and Kilfinnane, he went on to Cork, where he soon heard how cold and careless the people were, spoke to them exceedingly plainly, and saw some fruit to his pointed and loving words in revived life and increasing congregations. The membership, however, had dwindled down from nearly four hundred, seven years previously, to one hundred and ninety now. But the state of the Society in Bandon was more cheering. Since his previous visit several had gone home rejoicing, but their places were filled by others ; and most of the believers were much alive, particularly the younger members. Here he visited one of the, alas ! too many victims of the demon strong drink—one that a year or two before had been in high life, an eminent beauty, adored by her husband, and admired by some of the first men in the nation ; but was now without husband, friend, or fortune, confined to bed in constant pain and in black despair, believing herself forsaken of God, and possessed by a legion of devils !

At Waterford the prospect was most gloomy. "Through the continual neglect of the preachers, the congregation was reduced almost to nothing, and so was the Society." Mr. Wesley's labours produced a temporary revival, the congregations increased, Divine power accompanied the word, and the hearts of many were cheered ; but this not being followed up after his departure, the good impressions soon passed away. At Passage he preached to as dull a congregation as he had

seen ; and they would have been rude enough too if they had not stood in awe of a Mr. Freestone, who gave one and another, when they did not regard his signs, a stroke on the head with his stick. By this means the whole multitude was kept tolerably quiet ! At Old Ross there was a small and serious congregation. At Enniscorthy Wesley took his stand near the door of the house, in order that those might hear who were unable to get in, and says, “ it was an uncommon time, particularly with regard to those who had opposed the truth. One dropped down like a stone, many trembled and wept exceedingly, and all declared that such a work had never before been seen in the town. Here there had been for some years a more bitter persecution than anywhere else in the kingdom. The mob urged on by their superiors, beat and abused whom they pleased, broke open their houses, and did what they listed. A clergyman amongst others, encouraged them ; and having applied to the preachers 2 Timothy iii. 6, 7, and painted them as black as devils, added, “ I have not time to finish now ; next Sunday I will give you the rest.” But the following morning he was struck in a strange manner ; he imagined his room was full of evil spirits, and could not bear to be a moment alone. Having continued thus for some days, he screamed out, “ See that hobgoblin at the bed’s feet. O that roll, that roll, which he holds up to me ! All my sins are written there.” Not long after, without the least sign of hope, he went to his account.

At Kilkenny Wesley preached in the Tholsel to a civil but unawakened audience, the majority of whom appeared to be no more affected than if he had been talking Greek. However, many of them attended next morning, and more than ever in the evening. At Birr, where a chapel was built in the previous year, he removed some misunderstandings which had crept into the Society. At Aughrim he spoke as plainly as he could “ to a money-loving people,” but found that many of them were “ sermon-proof.” At Athlone he was the guest of Mrs. Teare and her daughter, Mrs. Penington, and thenceforward in his visits to the town he invariably stopped in their house. At Abbeyderg he held the quarterly meeting. “ Many of the people came from afar, and God gave them a good reward for

their labour." At Tullamore he found a small increase in the Society; at Mountmellick he had a solemn time; and at Mountrath he preached in the shell of a new house to many more than it could contain, and all were quiet and attentive. At Portarlington the Society, which once numbered one hundred and thirty, was now reduced to twenty-four, and some of these had only a name to live. However the congregations were large and serious. "I have not seen," he says, "in all the world a people so easy to be convinced or persuaded as the Irish. What pity that these excellent propensities are not always applied to the most excellent purposes!"

Having visited Edenderry and Ballymore, Wesley came to Bunklody,* "a little, ugly, scattered town, but delightfully situated," where he did not find five persons who would go a bow-shot to hear the preaching of the Gospel. So he got a table set in the street, and a few crept slowly together, who were as quiet, and seemed to him as much affected as trees. Yet one of these was a man in humble circumstances, named Frank Sherlock, from Clonegall, to whom the discourse proved a message from heaven. He became converted, and opened his house for preaching, which proved the means of the salvation of many precious souls.

At Carlow the sub-sheriff had promised the use of the town hall; but the high sheriff would not permit it. Thus Mr. Wesley was driven to the barrack field, where there were more than twice as many as the hall could contain, including many poor Romanists. At Baltinglass he preached to "a handful of serious people," and at Donard to a much more numerous, but not more serious congregation; and then returned to the metropolis where a remarkable blessing attended the services.

The Conference met in Dublin on the 19th and 20th of July: and nearly all the preachers in the country were present. The net increase in the number of members during the year amounted to four hundred and eighty. That this addition took place chiefly on the Augher round, it seems reasonable to conclude from the fact that the number of preachers on it was doubled, and no increase was made in the number on any other circuit.

* Now called Newtownbarry.

This Conference is memorable for the decided measures adopted by Mr. Wesley in thoroughly organizing the itinerant system, to which under God, Methodism is indebted for much of its success. The day following the meeting of the preachers was set apart as before for fasting and prayer. A few days previously Mrs. Bennis having written from Limerick, giving an account of a visit made by Mr. Bourke to that city, which proved a means of much good, and requesting his appointment there for the following year, her request was granted. This appears to be the earliest instance on record of the voice of the people being heard in connection with a preaching appointment. On Monday, July 24th, Wesley embarked for Holyhead, having spent a little more than four months in Ireland.

Thomas Taylor was appointed to Cork, which, he says, was not as he had left it four years previously. Then everything appeared lively; now all was dull and languid; the prayer meetings were discontinued; discipline was not kept up; and the Society was much shattered. He laboured with all his might to revive the former flame; but only succeeded to a small extent.

Mr. Johnson paid a visit to Carlow, where his message was specially to the rich, many of whom assembled and heard with great profit; and some were converted, who subsequently died in the Lord. In the town there was a Mrs. Bernard, who had been talked into Deism. Mr. Johnson told her that he had been a Deist for half an hour, during which his misery was beyond description, and that casting himself down before God, he cried, "Lord Jesus, answer for Thyself, or I am undone." Immediately his prayer was answered with such a clear discovery of the supreme godhead of the Redeemer, as for ever removed all doubts. Mr. Johnson's observations made so deep an impression on the mind of the lady as to lead to her complete deliverance from the erroneous views she had imbibed.

William Horner, to whom reference has already been made, was appointed to the Enniskillen circuit in the autumn of 1769, and in passing through Maguire's Bridge, delivered an earnest and affectionate address to an attentive audience in the open air, and then inquired if anyone was willing to show hospitality to a stranger, who had come many miles to try to

do them good. A Mr. Crawford came forward and invited him to his house, which thenceforward was a stopping-place of the circuit preachers, although a society was not formed in the town until some years later.

The Sunday school movement in Ireland was the offspring of the Methodist revival of the last century. Men and women whose hearts were filled with the spirit of Christ, could not fail to look with tender compassion on the poor, ignorant, neglected children by whom they were surrounded, and desire their instruction and salvation. Hence one here and another there engaged in this sacred work. The names of most of these have passed away, but their record is on high. The earliest appears to have been Samuel Bates, who had settled in Charlemont. About twelve months later—that is in 1769—he first met the children in the town for religious instruction, and continued to do so for several years. As during the week he was engaged at his trade, and in the evenings held meetings in the adjacent country, and as he devoted the whole of his Sabbaths to the service of God, we are justified in concluding that the children's meetings were held on the Lord's day, and if so, this was the first Sunday school in Ireland of which there is any record. The labours of Mr. Bates were not in vain, for several of the children grew up to be consistent members of the Society, adorning "the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things."

The south of the county of Antrim, including Ballinderry, Magheragall and Aghagallon, was the scene of a glorious awakening during the winter of 1769-70. The chief instrument was John Smith, then stationed on the Londonderry circuit.

Although there are few details of this blessed work, yet such was the impression made by the powerful preaching of the apostle of Christ, that over sixty years subsequently the people of the neighbourhood were wont to recite numerous remarkable incidents in connection with this gracious work. It seems to have commenced with a young man named John Martin, a linen weaver, who was so respected by the family in whose house he boarded that a room was placed at his disposal, where he met with some others for exhortation and prayer, and the attendance at these meetings continued to increase. John

Smith soon found his way there, and by means of his devoted labours the work deepened and spread in a most remarkable manner. Numbers were convinced of sin, some constrained to rise in the night and go out to the fields, despite the inclemency of the weather, and continue there for hours together in earnest prayer, until they found redemption in the blood of Jesus Christ. There was much need of Christian workers to lead in prayer, and give comfort and encouragement to inquirers and young converts. Valuable help was afforded by that poor, blind, but most devoted woman, Margaret Davidson, and the Lord soon raised up others in two young men as leaders, who were specially adapted to this work. Even some of the public houses were changed from dens of iniquity into houses of prayer. Not long after the revival commenced, two of the converts died very happy in Christ. While strength lasted they continued to entreat sinners to come to the Saviour, and exhorted those who were in Christ to "abide in Him." These triumphant deaths proved instrumental of much blessing to the infant Society at Ballinderry.

There are records of the religious experience of some of those who were converted during this blessed work. One was Mr. Thomas Kinley, who was attracted by the preaching of John Smith. The Word was attended with Divine power, he was brought under deep conviction of sin, and continued for some time in great anguish of mind, until, seeing the simplicity of the plan of salvation, he laid hold on Christ. Encouraged by what the Lord had done for him, he thirsted for higher spiritual blessings, and was enabled, by Divine grace, to realise the all-cleansing efficacy of the Saviour's blood. For about nineteen years his life afforded a striking and beautiful evidence of uninterrupted "fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." On his death-bed he seemed to exult as on Pisgah's top, and view the celestial land with unclouded vision.

Amongst others who were converted were the members of a Roman Catholic family named Crosson, who resided at Derryaghy. They were warmly attached to the institutions and dogmas of their church, and strict in their attention to its requirements; but prompted by curiosity went

to hear the strange preacher whose labours had occasioned so much sensation in the neighbourhood. Through the preaching of the truth the eldest daughter was deeply convinced of her sinful and perilous state, and resolved to seek the Lord at any cost. She at once joined the Society, although opposed and persecuted by her friends, and especially by her father. But he was prevailed upon to go again to the services, and the Lord met him in mercy, he sought the pardon of sins through faith in Christ, and did not seek in vain. For twenty-three years he lived a witness of the power of Christ to save to the uttermost; and in death gloriously triumphed through the blood of the Lamb.

When Thomas Crosson went a second time to the above services he was accompanied by three Roman Catholic friends, all of whom at the meeting were convinced of sin, and subsequently obtained salvation by faith in Christ. The grandsons of one of these, James Magee, of Derrykillultagh, are now walking in the fear of the Lord, and in close connection with Methodism.

Chapter XXX.

1770.

ABOUT the beginning of 1770, John Smith's ministry was greatly blessed to a young gentleman named Andrew Delap, whose father, an officer in the navy, had been killed in an engagement. The orphan boy was taken care of by his uncle, Mr. Samuel Delap, treasurer of the county of Donegal, who gave him a liberal education, so that he became a very fine young man, with an attractive appearance and a fund of native humour, which made him the life of the social circle. But he had such an impediment in his speech that when excited, he was convulsed before being able to express his thoughts. This unfitted him for any of the learned professions, but having a carefully cultivated taste for music, he became an excellent performer, especially on the organ. Being wishful to enter the

army, a promise was obtained that he would be sent out as a cadet with a corps which was about to embark for foreign service.

Meanwhile, he went one Sunday with some companions to the Methodist preaching place for diversion, seated himself opposite the pulpit, and assuming an attitude of devout attention, kept his friends in a state of subdued merriment. John Smith bore their improper behaviour without seeming to notice it, until the close of the service, when coming down from the pulpit, he went to Mr. Delap, and putting his hand on his shoulder said : “ Young man ! strange as it may now appear to you, you will shortly preach that Gospel which this evening you have been ridiculing.” No doubt Delap was not a little surprised at this prediction, and joined with his companions in pronouncing it a good joke. Yet the impression remained with him, and from that time Divine light began to shine into his mind ; but having no connection with any one who could help him, he was nearly driven to despair. Passing through a neighbouring town one day in this unhappy state, he saw a number of people going into the yard of an inn, and found that a Quakeress was preaching there. She described his state accurately, and gave him much encouragement. He was then led to attend John Smith’s ministry, which he found very profitable. Meanwhile he was disappointed in his expectation of entering the army, and soon engaged in a far nobler warfare. When he became a member of the Methodist Society his uncle was so annoyed, that he declared that he must either give up Methodism or leave his house. The young man was too deeply impressed with eternal things to be moved by the loss of temporal advantages, and “ chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.” He became so attached to Mr. Smith that he accompanied him round the circuit, notwithstanding the privations involved, and soon after obtained a sense of the pardoning love of God. Delap now felt an ardent desire to lead others to a saving knowledge of the truth ; but the impediment in his speech seemed to be an insuperable barrier ; for, even when he spoke at class, it was with great difficulty he could articulate so as to be understood, and it was painful to

witness his efforts. He earnestly besought the Lord to "unloose his stammering tongue to tell His love immense, unsearchable." And the prayer of faith was so fully answered that he was enabled, with great fluency and power, to invite others to the Saviour. In 1774 he entered the itinerancy, and travelled in some of the most important circuits with great acceptance and success.

In spring the Society in Londonderry sustained a very serious loss in the death of Mr. Knox, the most generous and influential of its members. He was evidently held in high esteem by Mr. Wesley, who, being asked if he supposed when they first met that Mr. Knox would desert him—as another gentleman of the same name in Sligo had done—said "No, there was an integrity in your father's whole manner, which made me reckon on his stability." This estimate of Mr. Knox's character proved correct; from the time of his conversion he pressed onward, ripening for a better world. Especially in his latter years he was a bright example of scriptural holiness. His becoming a Methodist could not divest him of his influence in the city, which several circumstances combined to maintain; but it nevertheless made him a sufferer for the truth. Those who had been accustomed to respect, and in some way look up to him, could not imagine how he had been so misled; and he was well aware that such was the general feeling, but "he endured as seeing Him who is invisible." The only person of influence in the circle of his friends who had any sympathy with his religious views was his brother-in-law, Mr. Fairly. This gentleman made a profession of religion, but his opinions were Antinomian, and though for a time he manifested much zeal, his conduct was such that he afforded little satisfaction to his friends. He, however, adhered to Methodism during Mr. Knox's life; but after his death the poor man swerved more and more: and, though as tenacious as ever of his theoretic notions, shewed no evidence of subdued passions or a purified heart.* The end of Mr. Knox appears to have been sudden, or at least unexpected, as he died intestate. His widow, who survived him upwards of twenty-two years,

* Life of the Rev. H. Moore, pp. 297-301.

not only continued her connection with Methodism : but also was unremitting in her kindness and attention to the preachers.

Their only son, Alexander, at this period a bright, intelligent, but delicate youth, was accustomed with his parents to attend the preaching services in Derry; and subsequently became the friend and correspondent of Bishop Jebb. Although he did not consider himself a Methodist, except for a brief time, yet he received his earliest religious impressions through the agency of Methodism, his religious views were moulded by its theological teaching, and he ever cherished for its ministers, and especially for Mr. Wesley, the most profound respect. At the close of the century, when a spirit of insurrection prevailed in this country, he, as private secretary to Lord Castlereagh—then Chief Secretary of Ireland—did good service for the preachers in assisting to secure for them freedom and protection in their itinerant labours.

At the Conference of 1769 John Dillon was appointed to Dublin, where he continued to labour, notwithstanding great delicacy, until the close of the year, when his health completely broke down. He grew weaker and weaker until the morning of May the 11th, when he wrote the following touching and beautiful epistle :—" I have got myself bolstered up in bed, to write a last farewell to my dear, dear sister Bennis. I am worn to a skeleton, and generally in great pain ; but, blessed be God ! He is my All-in-all ; my soul is happy in Him, and I testify with my latest breath that I 'have not followed cunningly devised fables ;' but that there is reality, nay solid happiness, in the religion of Jesus. O, my dear friend, how could I now hold up without Him ! He is precious ! He is precious ! He is altogether lovely ! My soul longs to be set free, that I may enjoy Him in full glory. Well, a few hours will complete my happiness.

' Hark ! they whisper, angels say—
Sister spirit, come away.

' Lend, lend your wings ; I mount, I fly :
O grave ! where is thy victory ?
O death ! where is thy sting ?'

" My dear sister, I am transported ; I now see the goodly land

in view, and it delights me so, that I am ready to rush into the narrow sea between. My last love, my last admonition to the Society in Limerick. They have been dear to me, and they have my last feeble prayers, that God may keep them in the hollow of His hand and make them 'all glorious within.' Tell them I am now going to give an account of my mission to them, to Him who sent me; and O how grievous if I must appear as a witness against any of them in the great day! Lord Jesus, forbid it. I cannot go on, my strength fails. My dear, dear sister Bennis, farewell; may that Lord and God, who is now my All-in-all, by His grace protect you; may His power preserve you; may His wisdom guide you, and His everlasting arms be for ever underneath you, and hold you up to the end: then our next meeting will be at the right hand of Jesus. O, that blessed Jesus! whom we have so often conversed about, and whose love is now drawing the chief of sinners to Himself. I don't know where or how to end; I could die writing of His love; but they drag the pen from me; again, and a last farewell."* Four hours after having concluded this letter, his happy spirit took its triumphant flight, "From Calvary's to Zion's height."

Soon after receiving the above epistle Mrs. Bennis paid a visit to Waterford, from which she wrote to Mr. Wesley, informing him that Mr. Saunderson was in Limerick, where the select bands met regularly, and a few had been added to their membership. As to Waterford, she says, "The people here go on at a poor rate, nor do I think it likely to be otherwise until they have a stationed preacher; they desired me to mention this, and would thank you to think of them." Mr. Wesley replied, seeking further information: "How is it with respect to Waterford? They would, and they would not. I sent two preachers to that circuit, why did they not keep them? Let me hear more from you in this matter." He did hear more from her. She wrote on July 8th—"The people are poor, and think the expense of a preacher's horse and family more than they can well bear; but if it were possible to let them have a single preacher resident in the city, or even to

* Christian Correspondence, pp. 101-2.

exchange monthly with the circuit preacher, without throwing any of the horse expense on them, I think it might answer a good end. As yet, the circuit is best able to bear expense; indeed, I feel much for the city Society, a handful of poor simple souls that need every support and encouragement. Dear sir, I hope you will not think me too presumptuous in dictating, but I find my soul knit to these poor sheep." Having thus wisely and earnestly stated her case, she succeeded; but not without getting a wholesome admonition for the itinerants. Mr. Wesley replied: "July 27th, 1770.—If the preachers on the Waterford circuit had punctually adhered to the plan which I fixed, the horse would have been no burden, but the misfortune is, every dunce is wiser than I. However, at your desire, I will send a second preacher into the circuit after Conference, but the preachers *must* change regularly: it would never do to let one man sit down for six months with a small Society: he would soon preach himself and them as lifeless as stones."* Accordingly, at the following Conference George Snowden was sent to the circuit, with Jonathan Hern as the Assistant; and the new arrangement proved successful.

Among those who at this time were actively engaged in connection with the Society at Waterford was Mrs. Elizabeth Ball. In consequence of some domestic trouble she had left her parents at an early age, and found a refuge in a respectable farm-house. Here she became acquainted with one Michael Ball, a Roman Catholic, to whom she was married, and then she removed to Waterford. The connection was far from a desirable one; she being of cultivated mind and refined habits and he a rude, vulgar, and illiterate man, engaged in one of the humblest of occupations. When she was converted to God this lack of congeniality became more marked; but if he did not profit by her holy example, he had sufficient appreciation of her character and worth not to interfere with her religious course. Consequently she gave herself up fully to the service of God, and became the leader of two classes, one of young women and the other of children. Of the latter Samuel Wood

* Ibid. pp. 27-31.

was a member when a boy, and received in it some of his earliest religious impressions. Mrs. Ball died about the year 1789.

In 1770 two young men were converted in Waterford : John Christian—who in 1772 was called by Wesley into the regular work, but retired in a few years, owing probably to the Calvinism which tinged his religious opinions—and John M'Burney, a young man of quiet and retiring spirit, but truly devoted to God, who also entered the itinerancy in 1772.

As the Methodistic year drew to a close, a short time before Mr. Taylor left his circuit he was at Bandon one Sunday, and while he preached in the street, Colonel Walpole, who had command of Lord Drogheda's Light Horse, and a number of the officers of the regiment, together with a clergyman came to the service, and behaved in a most unbecoming manner. On being requested to desist, the Colonel ordered four trumpeters into the middle of the congregation, and commanded them to sound as loudly as they were able. The preacher, quite equal to the occasion, promptly gave out the doxology, and when it was sung, repeated it, so that the poor trumpeters, having blown until they were black in the face, were fairly worn out, and retreated, having gained little for their trouble. It is but right to add that the chief transgressor in this incident was under the influence of drink, and next morning when sober, said he would not be guilty of such an indiscretion again for twenty pounds. However, the other officers returned to the service in the market-house that night, remained for a while pretty attentive, and then broke out into horrid blasphemies, for which they were justly reprov'd by Mr. Taylor, who referred to the gallant and heroic Colonel Gardiner, and expressed a wish that "all officers would imitate so pious and brave a man." This proved too much for the respectable rowdies, who called the preacher a scoundrel and attempted to force their way to pull him down ; but a large number, chiefly old women, bravely withstood them, and gained a complete victory. So Mr. Taylor was left in full possession of the field, and finished his discourse in peace.

In July Mr. Taylor left for England, and *en route* conducted one of the opening services of the new chapel in Gravel walk,*

* Now Blackhall place.

Dublin; the other being taken charge of by Mr. James Freeman, a leader and local preacher of much zeal and energy, to whose labours the erection of this building was chiefly due. The history of this undertaking is worthy of note. As already intimated, there were in the metropolis a number of leaders, the most violent of whom was Mr. Patrick Geoghegan, who through the influence of Mr. Morgan and Mr. Johnson, did not sympathize with the strict views, as to doctrine and discipline, entertained by Mr. Wesley and many of the preachers. By these dissentients it was thought desirable that a chapel should be erected as "an asylum," if the preachers should "lord it over the people."* To secure the approval and financial help of Mr. Wesley, the project was urged on the ground of the claims of the military in the adjoining Barracks; and to avoid the appearance of mere party work, as well as to obtain the assistance of other leading Methodists, it was represented to them, that on the death of Mr. Wesley "the people would become Dissenters," and this would be an asylum in Dublin for lovers of the Church.† It was also agreed that three gentlemen, Messrs. Garrett, Martin and Brooke, of well-known loyalty to Methodism, should be included in the number of the trustees. But care was taken that the original deed should not be drawn out in accordance with the requirements of the Conference: for as to doctrine, the standard laid down consisted of the Apostles' Creed, "the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity," and "the universality of the benefits of Christ's death;" and as to the appointments to the chapel, they could only be made by Mr. Wesley, with "the concurrence of the trustees." Of course, all this has been long since altered.

About this period some important additions to the Society took place in different parts of Ireland. In Limerick, through the Divine blessing on a sermon preached in the Methodist chapel, two soldiers were convinced of sin, one of whom was John Crook. He was the son of a Lancashire physician who squandered his fortune and then died a miserable and untimely death. John was put apprentice to a laborious trade, and, disliking it, enlisted in the army; when at the age of twenty-

* Letter of Mr. Johnson to Mr. Freeman.

† Case stated by J. Hampson.

eight he was converted, and then entered upon a course of usefulness that was signally owned of God.*

Mr. Charles Simpson, who had been an officer in the army, in the same regiment as the celebrated Colonel Gardiner, having retired from the service, settled in Sligo, where he became a steady, faithful member of the Society until 1819, when he died in the full triumph of faith, at the patriarchal age of one hundred and five years. A young man named Edward Drumgoole, a Roman Catholic, went to the Methodist services in this town, and was thus led to study the Word of God for himself, which resulted in his publicly renouncing Popery, and becoming a member of the Society. He subsequently emigrated to America, and became a successful preacher. One of his sons, the Hon. E. Drumgoole, was a distinguished lawyer, and a member of the United States Congress for years. Another of those led to Christ in Sligo, was a wayward youth named Charles Graham. At the wake of a respectable Protestant woman who had died in the neighbourhood, when those present began to indulge in foolish sports, a Methodist local preacher rebuked them. They insisted on their accustomed rights, but he was firm. They then bitterly retorted, "Perhaps we will get to heaven as soon as yourself." "That may be," said he, "but unless you live the life of the righteous, your hope of heaven is as vain as that of Balaam." To young Graham these words were "as a nail in a sure place." He soon after attended the Methodist services, was deeply convinced of sin, converted to God, and began to work for Christ.

At this time also Methodism first obtained a footing in Drogheda. A young man, a member of the Society, having come to reside in the town, at once commenced to hold meetings. A few persons were thus awakened to a sense of their state, and a small society formed. The first to enroll her name was Mrs. Gammell, whose husband had been in the army, but now was engaged in business, and she proved herself to be a steady, pious and useful member, who welcomed the preachers to her house, and exerted herself much to help forward the cause of God.

* *Methodist Magazine*, Dublin, 1808, p. 50.

Reference has been made to one of the early itinerants named James Kershaw, who formed a Society at Bluestone, which ere long, probably through want of oversight, became extinct. He was married to the daughter of a farmer named Dynes, who resided there. She died soon after, leaving an infant daughter; and when Mr. Kershaw received an appointment in England, the child was left under the care of her grandmother. This girl, being about sixteen years old at this period, enquired about the people with whom her father was connected, and heard of the Society at Kilmoriarty, four miles distant. She went to the place, accompanied by Margaret and Mary Malcomson, and their cousin Ann Malcomson, afterwards Mrs. Dodson of Tanderagee; and also induced her grandmother to invite the preachers to her house. Thus, about the year 1770, Methodism was reintroduced to Bluestone, and a small society formed. John Smith's labours in this neighbourhood are said to have been specially owned of God, and to have made a lasting impression.

A class also was formed at Lurgan where Isaac Bullock was one of the first converted through the Methodist ministry. He had been in the army, was engaged in the capture of several islands in the West Indies; and was one of sixty, called the "forlorn hope," who first entered the breach at the storming of Havannah, in 1762, only six of the party escaping with their lives. A few poor people united in Christian fellowship, and met in the house of this brave soldier, to hear the word of life, and to strengthen each other in the Lord.

It was probably at this period that the Earl and Countess of Moira opened the great hall of their mansion for weekly public services, conducted by the preachers, and not only encouraged their domestics and tenants to attend, but also they themselves were not unfrequently present.* It would appear, however, that the Calvinistic controversy, which soon afterwards arose, closed the door of this noble mansion to the Wesleyan itinerants.

A good society was formed at Ballymacawley, and the preachers were hospitably entertained by Mr. Waugh, father

* *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1836, p. 4.

of the Rev. John Waugh, and grandfather of the Rev. James S. Waugh, D.D., of the Australasian Wesleyan Conference. Mr. Waugh had been for many years an elder of the Presbyterian Church, and even after he became a Methodist retained the office, that he might in some measure restrain the fierce Calvinism then so prevalent in Ulster.

A very gracious revival took place in Tanderagee and the surrounding country, chiefly through the Divine blessing on the labours of John Johnson, who visited the town in July and October. Numbers of persons who had previously been very careless were converted, and some who had been bitter opponents of this work, and went to the meetings to arrest, if possible, its course, were themselves arrested by the power of Divine grace. One young man in particular who went with the determination not only to oppose but also to pull down the preacher, was so deeply convinced of sin, that he fell to the ground, became so convulsed in body that it required four men to hold him, and was carried home crying for mercy. Indeed so manifest was the power of God that many were afraid to go to the place of prayer, lest they should themselves be brought to repentance.*

Chapter XXX.

1771.

AT Glenarm John Smith found an opening to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation, and that under remarkable circumstances. It being deeply impressed on his mind that he should go and preach there, although he knew no one in the town he at once followed what he believed to be the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Near Glenarm he overtook a young lady riding, with her servant, and on entering into conversation with her, she told him that the town was a very wicked one. He enquired if there were any good men there, and she said: "Yes, there is one,

* *Methodist Magazine*, Dublin, 1806, pp. 248-49.

William Hunter." The evangelist rode on, enquired for the house of the one pious townsman, and when he reached it, a respectable young woman came to the door. He asked her name, and being told "Betty Hunter," he alighted, and said: "Betty, take in my saddle-bags, take my horse down to the inn, and tell every one you meet that a visiter at your house has good news to tell at seven o'clock." She did so, not knowing why. At the appointed hour the house was well filled; John Smith preached, and did so twice each day for nine days. So deep and general was the interest excited in the services, that even some members of Lord Antrim's family were present, and would allow none to molest the servant of God, saying they believed him to be "an honest and good man." When about to leave, he asked the landlady of the inn how much he was to pay for his horse. "Nothing, sir," she replied; "a gentleman has paid all, and will do so if you stay a month."

On March the 24th Mr. Wesley arrived in Dublin, accompanied by Mr. John Pritchard, a native of Meath, who, through a sermon of Mr. Jaco's in London about five years previously, had found redemption in Christ Jesus. He entered the itinerancy at the Conference this year, and proved to be a most devoted and useful preacher.

Wesley was aware that the Society in the metropolis was in an unsatisfactory state, there having been a continual jar for at least two years, "which had stumbled the people, weakened the hands of the preachers, and greatly hindered the work of God." He therefore determined to enquire fully into the case, and spoke, first to the preachers privately, then to the leaders, and afterwards met and conversed with them all together. The main point in dispute evidently was the authority of the preachers and leaders respectively. "In the Methodist discipline," writes Wesley, "the wheels regularly stand thus: the Assistant, the preachers, the stewards, the leaders, the people. But here the leaders, who are the lowest wheel but one, were quite got out of their place. They were got at the top of all, above the stewards, the preachers; yea, and above the Assistant himself." To this chiefly he ascribed the gradual decay of the work in Dublin, and thought the whole evil might be removed as all parties appeared desirous

of peace. He therefore drew up a paper in which he carefully defined the position of the leaders:—they had no right to restrain the Assistant if they thought he acted improperly, but might mildly speak to him, and then refer the matter to Mr. Wesley to be decided. They had no authority to hinder a person from preaching, to displace a leader, to expel a member, to regulate the spiritual affairs of the Society, to make any public collection, or to receive the yearly subscriptions. All this was the work of the Assistant. Neither had the leaders any authority to regulate even the temporal affairs of the Society; this belonged to the Society stewards. The power of the leader consisted simply in authority to meet the members of his class, to receive their contributions, and to visit those that were sick; and the power of all the leaders united was authority to shew their class-papers to the Assistant, to deliver the money they had received to the stewards, and to bring in the names of the sick. Such was the constitution of Methodism in 1771, as plainly laid down by its venerated founder. What the result would have been if it had been more liberal, is a question that it is impossible now to decide; but as a matter of fact, there can be no doubt it was not satisfactory to all parties in Dublin, and there were subsequent years of contention.

While Mr. Wesley was in the city he preached at least twice in the new chapel in Gravel walk, where many attended who could not, and some who would not, go to the other side of the city, so that he was fully satisfied that the services there would be for the glory of God. He was also agreeably surprised to find that the congregations in Dublin continued to increase during his visit, instead of gradually declining, after the first three or four days, as on former occasions, which he accepted as a token of good.

On April the 8th he started for the provinces, where on account of the extreme coldness of the weather he was obliged for some time to keep within doors. At Tyrrell's Pass the service was held in the shell of a new chapel: at Mullingar there was "a serious and decent congregation," which seemed completely unconcerned: but at Longford the people were quite of another spirit, and listened with eagerness to every

word. For twenty years no place in the kingdom seemed so barren as this, but now the seed so long scattered sprang up, and there was promise of a plentiful harvest. Having preached at Loughan, Athlone and Aughrim, he returned to Athlone where he found the people dwelling at ease, because there was no opposition. In Tullamore also he lamented the want of zeal, the Society being no larger than two years previously.

Birr, Coolalough, where Mr. Pritchard joined him, Mountmellick and Portarlinton having been visited, Wesley reached Kilkenny, where the new preaching house, "a neat and commodious building," had just been finished, and before he entered it in the evening it was filled from end to end. At Enniscorthy, there being then no chapel, he took his stand, protected in some measure from a bitter wind by the side of a house, and the people standing close together sheltered one another. Two of the brethren from Wexford having earnestly requested him to go thither, he preached in the market-house to a large and respectable congregation, which was as well conducted as any in the kingdom.

At Waterford he endeavoured to calm the minds of some that had separated from their brethren, but it was labour lost. He also states that on Sunday he went to the cathedral, where a young gentleman most valiantly encountered the "grievous wolves," as he termed the Methodists. Wesley says he "never heard a man strike more wide of the mark. However the shallow discourse did good, for it sent abundance of people, rich and poor, to hear and judge for themselves." This young gentleman was the Rev. George L. Fleury, who two years afterwards was appointed Archdeacon of Waterford. Two years previously, as well as on this occasion, he took advantage of Mr. Wesley's presence in the city to attack Methodism; and the two sermons, which were published anonymously, "were made up of the stale objections and invectives that had been used, by his superiors and seniors, times without number." Mr. Wesley wrote a pointed and pungent reply, which was published in Dublin a short time afterwards, entitled: "A letter to the Rev. Mr. Fleury." It is only justice to the memory of this clergyman to add that he lived to acknowledge his folly. In after years, referring to this controversy, he said,

with more candour than elegance : " I was but a novice and a greenhorn then."

At Clonmel Wesley preached in the market-place to a large audience, some of whom seemed inclined to make disturbance, but were kept in awe by the soldiers who were present. At Bandon he laboured to gather those who had been scattered, and to unite all in following after holiness. At Cork, on examining the Society, which was reduced from one hundred and ninety members two years previously to one hundred and seventy, he found many growing in grace, many rejoicing in the perfect love of God, and many more who were earnestly seeking the " mind that was in Christ Jesus." At Kilfinnane there was a large and attentive congregation in the room above the court-house, in which the Church service was held. At Limerick the audiences continued to increase both morning and evening during the fortnight he remained in the city and neighbourhood, and at its close he says he " found no Society in Ireland, member for member, so rooted and ground in love." Having preached at Ballingarrane, and visited Askeaton, after a few days he pushed on through violent wind and rain to Galway. Here the congregations included a large number of soldiers, and not a few townspeople. On the following day the Mayor and several others of influence in the city were present.

At Ballinrobe Wesley preached to about forty or fifty hearers. At Cappivicar every one appeared to be exceedingly serious, and some six-and-twenty seemed resolved to work out their own salvation and help others to do the same. Observing many fashionable people in the court-house at Castlebar, he spoke to them with much closeness and power. At Rahans, " one of the pleasantest seats in the country," he was the guest of Mr. Brown and his kind and amiable family. At Sligo he found a marked improvement in the Society, for he preached to an exceedingly earnest congregation, such as he had not seen there for years : and the prosperity of the work through the circuit was such as rendered necessary the appointment at the ensuing Conference of a third preacher.

At Ballyshannon, where Wesley was acquainted with some of the leading persons in the town, he preached in the

assembly room; but these quondam friends were ashamed to own him. At this time Methodism had no existence in the neighbourhood, and the inhabitants in general were exceedingly immoral. At Manorhamilton he preached in a pleasant meadow to a very large congregation; but found little life in the Society. It was, however, very different on the Enniskillen circuit, where he rejoiced greatly at the evident tokens of spiritual prosperity. Thus, at Swanlinbar "the people were full of faith and love, and panting after the whole image of God. At Lisbellaw, where the good man had no intention of preaching, he found a congregation waiting in the streets to hear him, and the sermon was listened to with the deepest attention; and at Sidaire there was a large number who thirsted for the water of life. Having preached at Mrs. Whitley's in Roosky, he came to Augher, where he found the people very cold, presenting a striking contrast not only to what they themselves had been, but also to the earnest Christians whom he had just left. Knowing that few would come to the house, he stood in the open air, and had about forty or fifty hearers, who seemed to be unconcerned enough. A gentleman at Drumquin having requested him to preach there, he began without delay, and it being the fair day, there was a numerous congregation, but not so many as at Magheralough. Amongst those present at the latter service were Mrs. Brown, a respectable widow who lived at Creevy, and her son George, who stood outside the congregation not understanding what was said, yet deeply impressed by the appearance of the venerable preacher. Soon after attending this service the strong prejudices of Mrs. Brown against Methodism having been removed, she invited the preachers to her house, which proved with the Divine blessing a means of much good to herself and family. Her two sons, George and Hugh, were thus led to decide for God and enter heartily into His work.* Through the influence of this now godly and zealous woman, Mrs. Margaret Johnstone—a member of the noble family of Annadale—who resided at Lisleen, was brought to religious decision; and no sooner had the Gospel proved to be to her the power of God

* *Arminian Magazine*, 1784, p. 520.

unto salvation, than she at once opened her house for the worship of God and the entertainment of His servants. From that period her growth in grace was marked and rapid; her path being indeed as "the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day;" while she herself was truly a "mother in Israel."

Mr. Wesley remained at Londonderry for about a week, preaching to large congregations that included several clergymen, and found much more life in the Society than he had expected. He met the members of a choir that he had formed two years previously—the first there is any record of in Irish Methodism; but as the preachers had not taken care or thought about them, they scattered, "and no wonder," he says, "for nothing will stand in the Methodist plan unless the preacher has his heart and his hand in it. Every preacher therefore should consider it not his business to mind this or that thing only, but everything."

Wesley arrived at Cookstown on Tuesday, June 18th: the house at which he alighted was filled with whiskey drinkers, and the whole town was all business and confusion, it being the fair day. However, a tent made by the Society at Terryhoogan, two years previously, was set up; the people flocked from all quarters to attend the service; and, although many of them were far from sober, behaved tolerably well. On Wednesday he preached at five a.m., and at noon to a lifeless company; and then, accompanied by Francis Wrigley and John Smith, rode to Stewartstown, where the service was held in the courthouse, and a large number of people assembled, most of whom listened with attention, though very few of them appeared to understand anything about religion. On Thursday the itinerants went to Castlecaulfield, where Wesley preached on the green before the castle to a numerous and attentive congregation. On Friday at eleven there was a still larger audience in the same place, whom he exhorted to be "not slothful in business," but "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." In the evening he preached at Armagh in Mr. M'Geough's avenue. The congregation was in an arbour, with the widespread branches of the trees quite overshadowing them.

On Saturday Mr. Wesley rode to Caledon, where two years

previously the Rev. C. W. Congreve, Archdeacon of Armagh, had received him with the most cordial affection, and invited him to preach in his new church ; but now, his love having grown cold, Mr. Wesley was left to preach in the street to a quiet congregation. On Sunday evening at Armagh such a multitude of people assembled, and were so closely packed, that, though in the open air, the heat was almost unbearable.

On Monday at noon Wesley preached at Blackwatertown, and in the evening at Clonmain, where the congregation was very dull. At Cockhill he found many of the people alive to God. At Grange there was a larger and still more earnest congregation ; but the most encouraging Society was at Derryanvil, several of the members of which continued to rejoice in the perfect love of God. At Portadown the people were attentive, and at Kilmoriarty there was the largest audience he had seen during the week. At Tanderagee the people flocked together from all sides, and at the closing service there was " a London congregation, both for number and seriousness." He also preached at Kilwarlin, near Lisburn, where in 1765 an opening had been obtained, and where, a few weeks previously, one of the preachers, Thomas Motte, had died in peace, having travelled only two years.

At Lisburn there was a numerous audience ; at Newtownards, the people had not the same spirit as those at Lisburn ; and at Belfast Wesley " never saw so large a congregation there before, nor one so remarkably stupid and ill-mannered." Having conducted a service at Carrickfergus, he preached at Larne to a very attentive people ; at Glenarm to a large number of respectable hearers ; and to a much larger audience at Ballymena. At Ballinderry a great multitude received the word with readiness of mind ; the people were earnest and simple-hearted ; and the Society consisted of about fifty members. In the house where he dined, the father and mother, with one son and five daughters, were all walking in the light of God's countenance. During his visit a touching incident occurred. As he prayed with an old woman, a little girl, her grandchild, said with tears, " Oh ! grandmother, have you no sins to cry for, as well as me ?"

Having spent two hours very pleasantly at the Earl of

Moir's, Wesley rode on to Drumbanagher, and preached to a serious congregation. That at Newry on each of the two following evenings was much larger, yet all heard and many seemed much affected. At Carlow he discoursed to a numerous and wild assembly, and also endeavoured to remove the differences in the poor shattered Society. Having preached at Baltinglass, and to a "lovely congregation" at Donard, he returned to Dublin on July the 12th, well satisfied with his excursion.

On May the 7th, Mrs. Bennis wrote to Mr. Wesley from Waterford as follows :—"I just now received a satisfactory letter from brother Swindells. He says the Lord has begun a great revival in Dublin, and trusts He will carry it on. O that He would do so here also ! Since you left this, brother Christian has preached regularly : his heart seems earnest for the work and the people of God. The day that you left town I met the women's bands : the Lord did wonderfully bless us together, and I find my heart closely united to them."* And again on July the 7th, "There has been no material alteration here since my last. Mr. Newall paid one visit to the city and Mr. Bredin three ; in the interims brother Christian acts as usual, and I think whilst they have him, they can feel no lack. I have had some opportunities of conversing with him, for which I have reason to be thankful ; the cause and people of God are very dear to him, and he loves you as his father. I have heard some object to his opinions, but I think his manner of managing them is such that they do no hurt to him or the people."†

On examining the classes in the metropolis, Wesley found that the number of members had in two years decreased from upwards of five hundred to less than four hundred, but he had hope of an improvement, as offences appeared to be removed, and brotherly love restored.

The Conference assembled in Dublin on July the 18th and 19th, and was "a solemn and useful meeting." The net increase in the number of members during the year was upwards of five hundred. On the evening of the 22nd Wesley

* Christian Correspondence, p. 88.

† Ibid., p. 86.

embarked for England, having spent nearly four months in this country.

John Smith was again appointed to Enniskillen, with Robert Wilkinson, Richard Whatcoat, and James Perfect. Although the circuit was not nearly so extensive as it had been a few years previously, yet it was still very large, numerous fresh openings having been found. The preachers had to bear many discomforts. The round took them eight weeks; and during this time each slept in nearly fifty different places, some of them damp, and others not very clean. They generally preached two or three times each day, besides meeting the Societies and visiting the sick; and often their only fare was potatoes and a little salt meat. It was, however, most encouraging to those appointed to labour here, to see tokens of continuous and increasing spiritual prosperity in every part of the circuit.

Of those converted to God at Old Cleens, the most noteworthy was Mrs. Blair. One of her sons, Andrew, then a thoughtful, studious young man, was brought to a saving knowledge of God, joined the Society, and became one of its brightest ornaments and most acceptable preachers. His talents were of a high order, his mind was well stored with Scripture truth, and he was greatly beloved. George Dice, who entered the itinerancy in 1780, was converted about this period; and also Gustavus Armstrong, then a lad twelve years of age, and so uniformly upright and consistent was his conduct, that a very shrewd woman, who had known him from infancy, said "Gustavus Armstrong was a saint from his birth." Other young men also were converted, and joined the Society, who became zealous leaders and local preachers. Amongst these were Matthew Dice and George M'Donald, who lived at Old Cleens, and John Maguire, son of the farmer who first received Mr. Dillon at Aughrim. It was a cause of devout thanksgiving that those who were appointed leaders, and the families by whom the preachers were entertained, continued without exception to retain an unabated attachment to Methodism, and to give evidence of growing spiritual life.

The gospel message reached various places in the neighbourhood of Sidaire. At Currin Wm. Henderson and his

family embraced the truth, a society was formed, and several persons were converted to God.

The most distinguished of those who at this time joined the Society in the circuit, was James M'Donald, then but a boy. More than half a century later he used to refer to this period with holy delight. He possessed a clear apprehension, lively imagination, and great readiness of speech, and was brought under the notice of Mr. Wesley, who appointed him to a circuit in 1784. He travelled in the Connexion forty-nine years, with great acceptance and success; and was for a short time editor of the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*.*

At this time the Gospel was first preached at Ballyreagh. Mr. William Graham, one of the first who received the preachers, was converted to God, and became a member of a class which met near his residence. Not only were many led to a saving knowledge of the truth, but of these several became most acceptable and useful ministers. In connection with this Society Thomas Barber, Joseph Armstrong, and John Darragh learned the first principles of religion, and sustained the offices of leader and local preacher until they were called into the ministry.

In the neighbourhood of Aghalunt a gracious work of awakening commenced, during which societies were formed at Leitrim, Grogey, Lisadearny, and other places, and many were able to testify that the Son of man had power upon earth to forgive sins. Several young men here began to call sinners to repentance, three of whom at least, Samuel Mitchell, James Jordan, and James Rennick, afterwards entered the itinerancy. At Grogey the preachers were entertained by Mr. Joseph Foster.†

About this year Mrs. Frances Russell, of Drumbadmore, was made the happy partaker of the pardoning love of God, and pressed forward to a high state of spiritual life, which she maintained through the vicissitudes of nearly sixty years. She heartily invited the preachers to her house, and it was favoured

* He was father of the late eloquent Rev. G. B. Macdonald, and grandfather of the Rev. F. W. Macdonald.

† Now called Brookeborough. ‡ Grandfather of the Revs. John and Thomas Foster.

with many times of refreshing coming from the presence of the Lord.

Mr. Alexander M'Nab, a Scotchman, was appointed Assistant on the Newry round. He was a man of considerable note, his intellectual gifts were of a high order, and his style fluent and attractive; but the consciousness of his power and popularity made him somewhat impatient of contradiction and ecclesiastical restraints. Of his circuit he says, though the people were naturally of a friendly disposition, and kind to the utmost of their power, yet he suffered greater privations than his constitution could bear, and he had many painful exercises of mind. The earlier part of the year was therefore spent very uncomfortably; but the latter made amends for former trials, as he saw fruit to his labours, and his own soul was blessed with an uncommon degree of peace and love. Through grace he obtained a deeper acquaintance with religion, and enjoyed more of the presence of God than he had ever experienced before.

On October the 15th, Mrs. Bennis wrote from Limerick—"Brother Hern and family leave town to-morrow; he was much blessed here, and has left an increase of sixteen in the Society. He is indeed a good, upright, faithful labourer. His wife, finding the affairs of the Society much embarrassed, refused the usual subsistence, and supported herself and children by working at her trade, though her youngest child was an infant. Mr. Collins has arrived. We do not doubt his abilities and good qualities; but are rather cast down by having another married preacher, with a young family sent to us, before we can recruit our finances. We now owe a heavy debt, and the weekly collections are not equal to the weekly expenses. The bulk of the Society are poor, so that the weight lies on a few, who are willing, and do contribute to answer the present expenses; but the debt still lies. Could we not have a single preacher at least every other year, till we are out of debt."* Of this request Mr. Wesley takes no notice in his reply.

At the latter end of the year Mr. Johnson, owing to the enfeebled state of his health, having felt compelled to withdraw

* Christian Correspondence, pp. 41-42.

from the itinerancy, settled in Lisburn, where he continued to work for Christ, and his labours were much acknowledged. But his usefulness was not confined to the pulpit; he longed for the happiness of the afflicted and those who were literally bound with misery and iron. Thus when some of the Hearts of Steel were under sentence of death at Carrickfergus, he visited them, and the Lord so blessed his plain, earnest words, that four were deeply convinced of sin, and cried for mercy, until the Lord spoke peace to their souls, and they with their latest breath professed faith in Christ.

Chapter XXXX.

1772.

IN Dublin Mr. Freeman, who took such a deep and active interest in the services in Gravel walk chapel, did not long enjoy them. In November, 1771, when visiting a member of his class who was ill of fever, he took the infection, and died in a few days. Soon after his removal the cause at the new chapel became so low that it was thought desirable by the trustees to sell the premises. This so grieved Mrs. Freeman that as a compromise it was resolved to seek Mr. Wesley's advice and to abide by it. He replied that if no conversions took place in the following quarter they might then sell, but not otherwise. At the close of the three months, at the love-feast a soldier unexpectedly stood up and testified to having received the pardon of his sins during the quarter, and thus the chapel which has proved the birthplace of many souls was saved to the Society.

At about this period a remarkable conversion took place which had an important bearing on the subsequent history of Methodism. Mrs. Mary Smyth, born in 1742, was the daughter of Mr. Samuel Grattan, a wealthy goldsmith of the city of Dublin, who died in 1768. Her husband, Mr. William Smyth, was highly connected, being related to a number of distinguished dignitaries of the Established Church. His

father, the Rev. John Smyth, was Chancellor of Conner; his grandfather, the Rev. Thomas Smyth, was Bishop of Limerick (1695-1725); and Dr. F. A. Smyth, one of his uncles, was Archbishop of Dublin (1766-71).

The circumstances connected with the conversion of Mrs. Smyth are replete with interest. Shortly after her marriage, it was announced in the public papers that Garrick was about to take a final leave of the stage—an event frequently intimated, but one which did not actually take place until some years later. Mrs. Smyth, who was a passionate admirer of theatricals, expressed her determination to witness the last acting of this celebrated man. Her husband endeavoured to dissuade her, but in vain; and as it was inconvenient for him to leave Ireland at that time, he requested his brother, Colonel Smyth, to accompany his wife to London. On their arrival they made immediate application for tickets, but none could be obtained. Colonel Smyth then, taking advantage of a former acquaintance with the Duchess of Leeds, sought her assistance, which was willingly given, and Mrs. Smyth accompanied her Grace to the theatre. Not only was her wish thus gratified, but Mrs. Smyth became the guest of the Duchess during the remainder of her sojourn in London.

The Rev. William Romaine was at this period in the zenith of his popularity, and had charge of the parish of St. Anne's, Blackfriars, where his services were accompanied with marvellous spiritual power. Hearing of the immense crowds that attended his ministry, and the astonishing effects produced, Mrs. Smyth expressed a strong desire to hear him, though her new friends were unanimous in their reprobation of the man and of the doctrines he preached. In vain it was urged that he was a Methodist—an enthusiast—one whom it was improper for her to hear; and that to procure admittance to a place so crowded was utterly impracticable. The more Romaine was reprobated, and the greater the difficulty seemed of obtaining admission to the church, the more urgent was Mrs. Smyth in her wish to hear him; nothing could deter her, for go she would, in defiance of every remonstrance. Romaine preached from the words: "Who knoweth the power of Thine anger? Even according to Thy fear, so is Thy wrath." The

word preached was applied by the Holy Spirit with power, leading her in humble penitence to the foot of the Cross, so thus she was enabled to lay hold on Christ as her Saviour.

Mr. Smyth's state of mind, when he heard of his wife's conversion, was little short of derangement; and with the utmost anxiety he hastened to London. There he learned from herself more fully what the Lord had done for her, and the great change that had taken place in her heart and life. He was overwhelmed with surprise and mortification, yet reluctantly consented to accompany her to hear Romaine, and judge for himself. In answer, no doubt, to the earnest believing prayer of Mrs. Smyth, the gospel message reached the heart of her husband, and he also was led to realize "the overwhelming power of saving grace." Mrs. Smyth's cup of blessing was then full, the Lord having granted what was doubtless the great desire of her heart; both she and her husband being united in love to Christ, and in the full determination henceforth to live for the glory of God.

Mr. and Mrs. Smyth, on their return home, not finding in the Established Church that sympathy and help which they desired, became members of the Methodist Society. Occupying a high social position, they took a leading part in all that concerned the advancement of Divine truth, and their residence became the resort of earnest and devoted Christians. Being the centre of a large and influential circle of friends they diffused through it a powerful influence for good.

However party feeling may have subsided in the metropolitan Society, difference of opinion as to doctrine and discipline evidently still continued. The action of the British Conference of 1770, in drawing up and publishing certain strongly-worded minutes in regard to Antinomianism, proved the signal of a keen and bitter religious controversy, which continued for five years, and which extended to Dublin. Some of the members of Society wrote to the Rev. J. Fletcher, as the champion of evangelical Arminianism, expressing their thanks for his able vindication of Divine truth; while others wrote expressing their disapproval of his views. Fletcher, with characteristic Christian courtesy, replied to both parties in one letter, sending his grateful acknowledgments to each—to one

for their thanks, and to the other for the manner in which they had withheld theirs, while he himself rejoiced that both had “agreed to disagree.”*

The breach, however, widened, and feeling became stronger, as five months later Wesley wrote to Mr. Alexander Clark, one of the leaders, saying that when he appointed him steward of the Society in Dublin, he both loved and esteemed the preachers; but that now he solemnly warned him of his danger, as he drank in the whole spirit of Patrick Geoghegan.†

At Limerick the Society in general, and the select bands in particular, were much quickened by the appointment of Mr. Collins to the city. He arranged for several days of fasting and prayer for the revival of the work of God, and these were much blessed; the class meetings were lively; the cottage prayer meetings revived; the public congregations much larger, and a deeper seriousness and spirit of inquiry were observable in the hearers. This was followed up by his successor, Mr. Glassbrook, whose Christ-like character won the hearts of all, and whose manner of enforcing holiness made it attractive, even to its opposers. Several were added to the Society; others in goodly numbers were converted; and some made perfect in love.

At Clones, James Boyle, to whom allusion has already been made, having realized peace and joy in believing, began at once to work for Christ. He was called upon to assist in prayer meetings, and possessing unmistakable ability, was encouraged both by preachers and people to exercise his talents, and many souls were brought to the Saviour through his instrumentality.‡ During this year a somewhat remarkable incident occurred in the town. A grave and respectably-dressed person one day called on James Boyle, and told him he was a Methodist preacher, and that if the people were apprized of it, he would hold a service in the evening. The congregation assembled, and the preacher came. He gave out one of Wesley's hymns, raised the tune, prayed, and then announced as his text, “For I determined not to know anything among you save

* *Some Genuine Letters of the Rev. Mr. Fletcher*, Dublin, 1788, pp. 36-38.

† *Irish Evangelist*, 1864, p. 89. ‡ *Methodist Magazine*, Dublin, 1812, pp. 130-1.

Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." Having preached an orthodox sermon, until he proposed to describe the blessings that grew from union with Christ, he made a pause, and said—"I can go no further. I know nothing of it, I will only say, live in peace and love one another, and the God of love and peace will be with you and bless you." At the next market day he appeared on a stage as a mountebank doctor, and what further became of him is not known.

Soon after this James Boyle removed to Aghalun, where he welcomed the preachers to his house, and exerted himself zealously in the cause of his Master. Although he had not the satisfaction of seeing a society formed immediately in the town, yet good was done, and seed sown which subsequently brought forth fruit in the neighbourhood.

A very gracious awakening attended the labours of the preachers in the county of Monaghan in 1771-72. Numerous Societies were formed, and amongst the rest one at Gola, where the itinerants were entertained by Mr. John Whitley,* who, at one time intended to enter the ministry, and in 1774 received an appointment, but owing to domestic circumstances was prevented from filling it. He was a man of acute mind and sound judgment, and truly humble in his religious views and feelings. He was also much esteemed as a class leader and local preacher, and for many years exerted a most beneficial influence on the Societies of the Clones circuit.

John Smith arrived at a part of the country about seven miles from the town of Clones, and the word preached by him there was accompanied with mighty power. Large numbers were convinced of sin; and so deep was their distress, that it was said of him that he sent the people mad. This, together with the novelty of his doctrines, and intense earnestness, brought many to hear him, and amongst the rest, a young woman named Catherine Stuart. She went on one occasion with some friends to the appointed place of meeting, and was greatly disappointed on hearing that Mr. Smith had been unable to attend, having sent John Price from Tonymolan as his substi-

* Grandfather of the Messrs. Whitley, of Enniskillen, and Messrs. Grayden, of New York.

tute. They arrived a little before the service, and found the local preacher sitting with an open Bible in his hand, speaking to those present, and frequently appealing to the Book. Amongst other things, he said, "Before my conversion I used to dispute with John Smith, but never found myself at such a loss as when he read these words—'Behold, what manner of love,' " etc.; and on saying this, the young evangelist surveyed his audience with such tenderness and earnestness that even the look reached Catherine's heart, but she slighted the feeling of conviction that arose in her mind. During the sermon such was her mental conflict that, unable to restrain her feelings, she cried aloud in bitter anguish, and then sank insensible on the floor. On returning home, her mother was annoyed, corrected her severely, forbade her going to the Methodist meetings, and confined her to the house. At length Catherine having heard that a love-feast was about to be held at Clones—the first meeting of the kind held there—she determined to go, and with a friend set out the night previous. Her mother pursued her, and arrived in town before the service began; but in compliance with the earnest appeal of her daughter, consented to go with her. The meeting was held in the market-house, and at its close mother and daughter were invited to partake of the refreshments provided by the Society for those who had come from a distance. The opportunity was seized by the preachers of speaking faithfully to Mrs. Stuart, who at length consented to allow her daughter liberty of conscience, and soon after, being justified by faith, Catherine obtained peace with God. She was spared for more than half a century, during which she maintained her confidence, although called upon to suffer, on account of her religious profession, persecution of a peculiarly painful as well as protracted nature.

When John Smith preached on one occasion in Clones, amongst his hearers was William M'Cornock, a native of the county of Donegal, then about twenty-six years of age. He had received a liberal education, and at one time taught a school, and at another acted as a surveyor. He, however, fell into intemperance and other sins, and lived in rebellion against God for several years. Such was his character when he

heard John Smith preach. He was greatly surprised when told of the very defective education which the preacher had received, and led to desire a personal acquaintance with him. Soon after an opportunity offered, when the devoted evangelist narrated to the sinner what manner of life he himself had lived, and what God had done for his soul. William M'Cornock listened to the marvellous story till deep conviction of his own sinfulness and folly was followed by an earnest desire for salvation. At length God manifested Himself in mercy to his soul, and he at once engaged in the Lord's work. Returning home he went to Pettigo, and called at a friend's house. While here the servant girl mocked him ; but when he prayed with the family, she was convinced of sin and soon after converted to God. He was thus the means of introducing Methodism into this little town. Notwithstanding persecution, and the strenuous efforts of his friends to lead him back into his former course, he could not be moved. He became valiant for the truth, and proved instrumental in turning many from the error of their ways, including some of the most ignorant and wicked in the part of the country in which he lived. In 1779 he was called into the itinerancy, and God abundantly blessed his labours both in his native land and in the West Indies.

Laborious as was the work on the Enniskillen circuit during this year, the servants of God received ample compensation in seeing the good cause prosper ; two hundred and sixty-eight members were added to the Society.

On the list of stations for 1772 the name of John Smith does not appear, it being arranged that he should be set free from circuit work to travel through the country as a missionary. His duty was to conduct open-air services, avail himself of new openings to preach the Gospel, and engage in revival work as he had opportunity. He was thus the first preacher appointed as a general missionary in Ireland, after Methodism had been in some measure consolidated. The work was just that for which he was specially adapted, and was most needed in this country ; but it was of such a nature that it is impossible now to trace its course. He went as a pioneer to the moral deserts of the province of Ulster, and many were brought to Christ, who, in all probability, would otherwise never have been reached.

After the close of the British Conference, as Mr. Swindells with one or two other preachers crossed the Channel, a circumstance occurred which indicated his fidelity in his Master's work, and was crowned with the Divine blessing. There was on board the vessel in which he sailed a gentleman of property, George Pigott, Esq., of Chetwynd, near Cork, who was returning from Bath, where he had gone in the vain hope of recruiting his health. Mr. Swindells, earnestly desiring his spiritual welfare, succeeded in awakening his interest in religious conversation, and then seized the opportunity of impressing on his mind the necessity of a change of heart in order to enter the kingdom of heaven. So deeply was Mr. Pigott affected that at the end of the voyage he invited the devoted evangelist to his house, and soon after was led in penitence of spirit to the foot of the Cross. He had an only son, at that time a colonel, and subsequently a major-general in the army, who had so displeased him that he disinherited him. Mr. Swindells having heard this, ventured to expostulate on the subject, which led him to add a codicil to his will, bequeathing to his son the property previously left to others. For some time Mr. Pigott was greatly tempted with doubts and fears, probably owing to the feelings he had cherished with regard to his son; but at last, having made a full surrender of himself to the will of God, he obtained a complete victory. Thus, on one occasion, after Mr. Swindells had been conversing with him, and before engaging in prayer, they united in singing the beautiful and appropriate hymn beginning—"My God, the spring of all my joys." When they came to the third verse, and were about to sing the line—"If Jesus shows His mercy mine," Mr. Pigott exclaimed—"Stop! stop! leave out that *if*; there is no need of it now. Jesus does show His mercy mine. He does whisper I am His." The last words he uttered were addressed to the honoured instrument of his salvation. "Follow me," he said, "and we will praise God and the Lamb to all eternity. I am near my rest; and when I arrive there Jesus will say, 'This is a brand which I have plucked out of the fire.'" Colonel Pigott, having ascertained how deeply he was indebted to Mr. Swindells, settled on him a handsome annuity, which the good man thenceforward punctually received.

Another conversion at this period, of deep interest and fruitful of much good, was that of Mrs. Gayer, who was daughter of Valentine Jones, Esq., of Lisburn, and had married in 1758 Edward Gayer, Esq., clerk of the Irish House of Lords. He resided in a beautiful mansion delightfully situated at Derryaghy, described by Mr. Wesley as "one of the pleasantest spots in the kingdom." She was remarkably attractive in her appearance and manner, a charming singer, and highly accomplished. Passionately fond of dancing and other worldly amusements, the life and soul of a highly respectable and fashionable circle of friends, she entered into the gaieties and frivolities of the times with all the enthusiasm of an ardent temperament.

But some time after her marriage she became very deeply concerned about the salvation of her soul. In her anxiety she consulted a clergyman concerning her state, and what she should do to obtain relief of conscience. He said that her spirits had become depressed, and that she should travel, go more into society, and engage more frequently in fashionable amusements. She followed his advice, and not finding rest of soul, then endeavoured at once to raise her spirits and satisfy conscience by a strange compromise—entering heartily into the world, yet faithfully attending to her religious duties. This she carried so far that on one occasion, when she went to a ball at Dublin Castle, she took her prayer-book with her, and after each dance retired and read a portion of it. But, being still unhappy, she went about to establish her own righteousness as the ground of her acceptance with God,—being ignorant of "the righteousness which is of God by faith." She attended every service of the church, engaged in works of mercy, fasted and prayed; but all failed to bring the longed-for blessing. Instead of realizing holiness, the Spirit gave her a deeper insight into the depravity of her heart; and her sense of condemnation so increased that she was in danger of giving up, in utter despair, all hope of salvation, when the Lord in mercy interposed on her behalf.

Mr. Crommelin,* who was surgeon of a regiment of dragoons

* Apparently a grand-nephew of the celebrated Louis Crommelin, the founder of the linen trade in Ulster.

then stationed in the neighbourhood, and was a hearty Methodist, having occasion to visit Mr. Gayer on business, embraced the opportunity of introducing religious conversation. Mrs. Gayer was surprised to hear a gentleman, and especially an officer in the army, speak on such subjects ; and, being favourably impressed with his spirit and views, told him of her “restless wandering after rest.” He then showed her the “new and living way,” whereby we have access unto God, even by Christ Jesus ; and urged a present acceptance of the Saviour. As he thus told “the old, old story of Jesus and His love,” Mrs. Gayer believed, and the Spirit itself witnessed with her spirit that she was a child of God. Mr. Crommelin strongly recommended her to become a member of the Society ; but this she hesitated to do, being unwilling to act contrary to the prejudices of her husband against Methodists and Methodism.

Not long after having thus been brought into living union with Christ, Mrs. Gayer having occasion to call on Mrs. Cumberland, at Lisburn, that good woman inquired whether she had ever heard the preachers, told her how different their sermons were from those they were in the habit of hearing, and related some of the wonderful results which had followed their labours. Mrs. Gayer inquired when a service would be held. Mrs. Cumberland replied that a meeting would take place in her house on the following day, and invited Mrs. Gayer to be present ; an invitation which she accepted, and took with her her only daughter, a girl of thirteen. The word which Mary Gayer then heard came with power to her heart, and having thus been deeply convinced of sin, her prayer was soon after answered, and she was enabled to rest on Jesus as her Saviour, to the unspeakable joy of both herself and her mother. The blessing then received she retained until she passed triumphant home, sixty years subsequently. In connection with the above meeting both Mrs. and Miss Gayer were led to become members of the Society.

At Charlemont the congregations became so large that the room used for the service did not afford sufficient accommodation ; but a malt-kiln was taken, and fitted up for the use of the Society and congregation. One of those who attended the

services was Mrs. Dickson, who, on account of her age, was unable to walk to the parish church at Loughgall, about four miles distant. Her son James, with whom she lived, was annoyed at her having any connection with the Methodists; but at length went to hear for himself, although determined never to get identified with such a people. Having slipped into the malt-kiln, and secured a position unobserved, his mind was most favourably impressed with what he heard, which subsequently led to his conversion to God, and his official connection with Methodism, which continued for upwards of half a century.

In August Mrs. Bennis visited Waterford, and her report to Mr. Wesley is—"This Society is increased in number and grace since I was last here: I meet a band and a class; we all speak with freedom. I love the people and I believe they love me. There are three preachers on the circuit, and they all have work enough." And again on October the 18th she writes, "I left the Waterford Society in a prosperous situation." To this success there can be no doubt Mrs. Bennis herself contributed much by her holy example and zealous efforts, a fact which is thus acknowledged by Mr. Wesley in a letter to her, dated November 3rd—"Your time was well bestowed at Waterford; many, I doubt not, will remember it with thankfulness. But why this want of discipline in Limerick? Whenever this is dropped all is confusion: see that it be immediately restored. Captain Webb is now in Dublin, invite him to visit Limerick: he is a man of fire, and the power of God constantly accompanies his word."

Reference is here made to Captain Thomas Webb, a retired military officer, who was wounded in the eye at the siege of Louisberg, and was one of the brave army under Wolfe that scaled the heights of Mount Abraham. In 1765 he found peace with God while conversing in Bristol with a Moravian minister; and soon after became a Methodist, entered heartily into work for Christ as a local preacher, and was one of the principal agents in planting Methodism in America. He was brave, hearty and generous, highly esteemed by Wesley, and remarkable for his deep piety and fervent zeal. The invitation to Limerick was given and accepted, and blessed results

followed. The chapel was not large enough to accommodate the congregations ; many were awakened, and the members of the Society quickened, so that estrangements were removed, and all seemed united in Christian love and zeal.

In the parish of Ardstraw George and Hugh Brown made themselves exceedingly useful. Not satisfied with labouring in those places already visited by the itinerants, their desire was “to preach the Gospel in the regions beyond,” and facilities for doing so were not lacking. A member of the Society having removed to one of these districts of country, George seized the opportunity of conducting a service there; many flocked to hear, some of whom received the word with meekness, were led to the Saviour, and became members of the Society. Opposition soon arose, the local clergy endeavoured in vain to prevent their people from attending the services; the Presbyterian minister read a paper to his hearers excluding from the Lord’s table all who were identified with Methodism; and when this failed recourse was made to violence. A number of men, well armed, were despatched to a meeting conducted by Hugh Brown, to take his life: and on arriving they first “sent in a black-a-moor to pull the fellow down.” But he returned saying, “I will not, for he is a fine fellow, and is preaching the word of God.” They then rushed in, the lights were extinguished, and the young preacher escaped through a window, much to the chagrin of his would-be assassins. Some of the most violent opposers, however, were eventually won for Christ. Thus a woman who went to one of the services determined by cursing, swearing, and singing songs to create disturbance, became affected in such a manner that she was obliged to withdraw without saying a word. She then came to hear, and God was glorified in her conversion.

Chapter XXIV.

1773.

JANUARY the 1st, 1773, was set apart by the Society at Limerick as a day of fasting and prayer for the revival of God's work; and during the whole day, as well as at the covenant service in the evening, the Lord heard the supplications of His people, and wonderfully manifested His presence in their midst. The blessed results were most apparent, old prayer-meetings were re-established, the congregations increased, and valuable additions were made to the Society.

The Countess of Huntingdon felt a deep interest in Ireland, and was instrumental in establishing several congregations in the country. On Mr. Shirley representing to her ladyship the deplorable moral and religious state of the metropolis, she gave instructions for the erection of a commodious building for the celebration of Divine worship according to the forms of the Established Church; and meantime, at the suggestion of Mrs. Paul, wife of the Dean of Cashel, the Merchant Tailors' hall was secured and set apart for this purpose. Several ministers were sent from England at the expense of the venerable Countess, and their preaching was attended with considerable success. At length the plan of erecting a chapel was abandoned, and early in this year the old Presbyterian meeting-house in Plunket street was rented instead. Earnest and successful services were conducted here by several students from Trevecca, by Mr. Shirley, and by the Rev. C. Stewart Eccles, who, when a student at Trinity College, had been led to decision for God through the sermon preached by Mr. De Courcy in St. Andrew's church-yard, and was now actively and zealously engaged in evangelistic work.

Meanwhile the work continued to extend and prosper in the north. On one occasion J. Smith went to Knockmanoul much weighed down in spirit, having heard that the Society there had not retained its fervour. On arriving at Molly

Gregg's* he immediately inquired for his room, into which he entered without delay, shut the door, and spread his case before the Lord. It seemed to him for some time as if he pleaded in vain; but he persevered, and so absorbed was he in prayer that he was deaf to repeated calls to dinner. The day drew to a close, and his door remained unopened. At length Molly Gregg, whose kind heart could not brook the idea of the preacher fasting for such a length of time, opened the door, and found him so earnestly pleading with God as to be unconscious of her presence. Shortly after she again entered, and said: "The house is filled with people, and many are outside unable to get in." Whereon he leaped to his feet in exultation, saying: "O! Molly Gregg, I have got it, and will now go and deliver my message." During the subsequent service the Spirit of God descended in mighty power: sixteen souls were converted, and a gracious work commenced, which is said to have been "the most extensive revival in the north of Ireland."

Most likely in connection with this blessed work a persecution arose, which for its virulence, duration and fatal results, has perhaps no parallel in the history of Methodism in Ireland. Men professing to be zealous sons of the Church, proclaimed the doctrines of the forgiveness of sins and the witness of the Spirit to be deadly errors. Abusive language, dirt, stones and clubs were the arguments they employed. A man might swear, tell lies, get drunk, indulge in all manner of licentiousness, and yet, if he went to church occasionally, be deemed by priest and people a good Christian; but if he began to read his Bible regularly, pray in his family or with his neighbours, reprove sin, or listen to the preaching of the Methodists, he became an object of reproach and hatred, was set up as a mark to be shot at, and treated as the filth and off-scouring of the earth. Almost every hand was uplifted against the Methodists. The aristocracy opposed them; the clergy, both in and out of the pulpit, railed at them; and the magistrates, in general, not only denied them a hearing, but in some instances were amongst their most bitter persecutors.

* Mrs. Graham's.

The bonds of friendship were severed, family ties broken, and young men and women driven from the homes of their fathers to seek shelter elsewhere. The preachers especially were the objects of hatred and malignity. In some instances brave men armed with guns and bayonets, and carrying a supply of provisions, escorted the servants of God, travelling by by-roads in order to escape attacks from lawless mobs. Mr. G. Irvine, of Magheralough, and others, often thus acted as a bodyguard to the itinerants.

In Belturbet one fellow resolved to stand inside a door at the end of the market-house, and to slam it in the face of the preacher as soon as he approached ; but just as the servant of God drew near, a sudden gust of wind drove the door so violently against the man, that he himself was thrown down on his back, and so bruised that he was a long time in recovering. Two members of the Society at Tonymolman were so beaten that they died from the effects. This attracted public attention, and the perpetrators of the outrage were arrested at the instance of a local magistrate.

Thomas Halliday was seized by order of Mr. Carleton, of Markethill, near Enniskillen, a magistrate of great influence in that part of the country. When Mr. Halliday was brought before him he found the justice of the peace accompanied by a gentleman, who at once proceeded to examine him, and who, in the course of conversation, made such objections to Scriptural truth that Mr. Halliday, looking him full in the face, said : " I wish, sir, I knew who your minister is ; for I would go directly and tell him what an infidel he has in his parish, and show him that it is his duty solemnly to warn you of your awful state." He being himself the rector of the parish, became confused, Mr. Carleton burst into laughter, and the preacher was dismissed.

God in His providence sometimes interposed in a most solemn and impressive manner on behalf of His servants. For instance, a constable having in his pocket a warrant issued by a clerical magistrate for the arrest of a local preacher, arrived at the place of meeting as the text was announced, but before he could execute his unjust commission was himself arrested by death. A profound impression was thus made on the minds

of those who instigated the persecution in this immediate neighbourhood, which thus terminated.

Warnings of danger sometimes came from unlikely quarters. Thus John Smith was on his way to preach at a hamlet a little distance from Swanlinbar ; in going to which it was needful to cross a large bog, and also a river, which was much swollen, but spanned by a bridge. He was met by a woman, who told him a mob was waiting at the bridge to illtreat him. At first he disregarded the warning, because she had been accustomed previously to make use of abusive language to him. The woman, however, called to him a second time, and this made him hesitate to proceed. The place where he intended to preach was about a mile further on, and instead of going by the bridge, he spurred his horse, leaped a hedge, swam the river, crossed a part of the bog, which even in summer was dangerous, and reached his destination in safety. He preached to the people, and having ascertained that his persecutors, thinking he would be compelled to return by the bridge at night, waited there to accomplish their malicious purpose, he returned in safety by the same perilous way as that by which he had gone.

On one occasion, when John Smith was riding within two or three miles of Killashandra, he was met by a minister, who, in a most insulting manner, said to him : “ How dare you go about preaching, frightening the whole country out of their senses, and thinning my congregation ? ” To which the evangelist replied, that instead of turning the brains of the people, he only endeavoured to turn their hearts to the Lord, thus teaching them true wisdom. The minister, in a rage, called him a scoundrel and a canting rascal, and horsewhipped him unmercifully. John Smith, like his blessed Master, “ when He was reviled, reviled not again ; when He suffered, He threatened not ; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously.” The minister rode away foaming with rage. Before eight days had expired, his house at Killygowan took fire during the night, and it was with the utmost difficulty that he and his household escaped, destitute of everything except the clothes they wore.

One evening as John Smith was conducting a service in a house near Swanlinbar two young men, who should have been

gentlemen, conspired to pull down the preacher, and cast lots as to which should take the initiative. The lot fell on the more audacious of the two ; but the moment he entered the room all his strength and resolution forsook him, and he fell on the floor with such violence that blood gushed out of his mouth and nose. His companion pulled him out, and they staggered home frightened almost out of their senses. In order to excuse their failure they spread the silly story that whosoever the preacher looked at through his large eye-glass was at once struck into fits.

The greatest enemy to the work of God in this country was a gentleman who held the commission of the peace. He formed a gang of the worst characters in the neighbourhood, of which he was the ringleader, who, on all possible occasions, assaulted "Swaddler John and his followers," as the Methodists were termed, did not hesitate to make false accusations against them, and succeeded in getting some imprisoned. More than once John Smith was thus unjustly deprived of liberty. On one occasion he was locked up in a house in Swanlinbar by this magistrate, who, pistol in hand, threatened death to any one who should come near the prisoner. Yet these threats did not prevent the people from gathering at the window of the room, where the servant of God was confined, to converse with and cheer their friend. Some time after this the magistrate passed through a series of terrible calamities. He was forsaken by his wife ; one of his sons, a promising young man, was torn to pieces by a wild beast ; his estate was frittered away ; and, having lost his social position and been superseded in the magistracy, he wandered about as a vagabond, and died blaspheming God.

The junior preacher on the Enniskillen circuit, John M'Burney, who had just entered the ministry, preached one day in the market-place at Clones. Many attended, and a gracious influence was realized ; but some ungodly men, chiefly Roman Catholics, assembled and greatly disturbed and annoyed the congregation ; so that it was thought the place must be given up, as no magistrate would interfere. Just when the dread of this was at its highest a very unexpected and strange occurrence took place. An old military pensioner, a Presbyterian,

surprised the preacher and congregation by taking his stand beside a tree in the centre of the market-place, with musket in hand, and swore that he would shoot the first man that would pass that tree to disturb the preacher. Not one of the rioters, although they shouted at a distance, attempted to pass the prescribed limit. The rough old soldier mounted guard regularly every Sabbath afternoon for some weeks, until all opposition ceased in the town. The young preacher, however, soon after fell a victim to the cruelty of his persecutors elsewhere.

On the evening of March 4th he conducted a service at Mr. Perry's, near Aghalun, and while singing a hymn a large mob surrounded the house, and six ruffians, armed with clubs, rushed in and fell upon the people; but they were thrust out, and the door fastened. On this, the rioters smashed the windows, broke into the house, and hauling out both men and women, beat them without mercy. Mr. M'Burney was dragged out, and when he attempted to rise, knocked down. The villains continued beating him on the head and breast as he lay senseless on the ground; yet after awhile, coming to himself, he got up, but being too weak to stand, staggered and fell. Then one of the mob set his foot on the preacher's face, swearing he would "tread the Holy Ghost out of him," and another thrust a stick into his mouth. From the effects of this ill-treatment he never recovered.

Mr. Mitchell, who lived about a mile from the town, was also one of those who were basely maltreated, and his house was attacked on the following Saturday by a riotous mob, who threw large stones at the windows and broke the door. Mr. Perry and Mr. Mitchell then obtained warrants for the apprehension of some of the rioters, but the constable would not execute them. At the following assizes in Enniskillen, the grand jury threw out all the bills. Such was the administration of justice in Fermanagh, which tended only to encourage a spirit of persecution. A Methodist preacher could not pass through the Protestant town of Enniskillen without endangering his life.

The Methodists were thus, in certain instances, for their own protection, constrained to repel force by force. On one occasion, during the time of service at Mr. Foster's, Grogey,

the house was attacked by a riotous mob, and several of the congregation having seized guns, fired over the heads of their assailants to frighten them. Not prepared for such a reception, the ruffians were about to retreat, when their leader recalled them, exclaiming, "Come on, boys ; it's only turf mowl they're firing." Then one of the congregation took deliberate aim and fired. A man was wounded, and gave a jump, swearing it was "quare turf mowl" he had got, while his companions took to flight. By a marked Providence the injury thus inflicted proved a means of lasting good : for the poor fellow was led to see his folly and sin, gave his heart to God, and joined the Society.*

On March the 26th Mr. Wesley landed at Dunleary, and having been forbidden by his physician to ride, brought with him for the first time his chaise, which, however, he was deprived of the opportunity of using, as the commissioners of customs would not permit it to be landed. This was overruled for good, as had it come on shore it would have been utterly spoiled. Wesley was obliged to hire another vehicle, which had its own misadventures. At Ballyhack ferry it went overboard, and was with difficulty recovered ; at another place it took five hours to drag it less than a dozen miles ; and in a third it was disabled by the breaking of one of the axletrees ; while more than once it was in danger of being dashed to pieces by furious mobs.

In Dublin Wesley examined the Society, and found it somewhat lessened in numbers ; but well united together in truth and love. Having preached at Tyrrell's Pass, Mullingar, and Longford, he came to Athlone, where a whole army of soldiers, with their officers, were present at the service. He then proceeded to Ballinasloe and Aughrim, and thence to Eyrecourt, where the crowd gave him a loud huzza as he passed into the market-place to preach, and during the service all were civil and many serious. A great awakening had taken place in the town, and many of the most notorious and profligate sinners had obtained the great salvation. At Clara he preached in the church, "the neatest in the kingdom," that he had seen. At Tullamore all the soldiers in the town were present, none of whom were more affected than one who had

* *Irish Christian Advocate*, 1885, p. 5.

been most notorious for his wickedness, but now seemed fully resolved to forsake his sinful ways. At Mountmellick there was "an artless, earnest, serious people." At Mountrath the Lord was present, both to wound and to heal. At Kilkenny there was "a numerous congregation, about as genteel, and full as unawakened, as that at Portarlinton." The next day it was considerably larger, and many seemed to be deeply affected. At Enniscorthy, as no public building was available, Wesley stood at Hugh M'Laughlin's door, so that both those within and without could hear.

At Waterford there was cheering evidence of spiritual prosperity, the number and seriousness of the congregations being very satisfactory; but with the tokens of success persecution arose. Word having been brought that Mr. William Hobbs, the Mayor, was willing that Mr. Wesley should preach in the bowling green, he went thither, and a large multitude quickly assembled, some of whom attempted to raise a disturbance, the majority of the congregation being deeply attentive. At that time the windows of a house, occupied by wealthy merchants named Farrell, looked out on the green. Messrs. Farrell and family, together with a priest, stood at the window, and encouraged a Catholic mob to attack Mr. Wesley. These rowdies knocked down John Christian, with two or three more, who endeavoured to quiet them. Some gentlemen then rushed into their midst, and having inflicted some heavy blows, seized the ringleader, and delivered him into custody: while another, Sir John Alcock, conducted the venerable preacher in safety home. The rioters, who were workmen in the employment of Messrs. Farrell, were subsequently brought to trial; but as the chief delinquent, upon whom the whole guilt was thrown, had escaped, and the jury was packed, the other traversers were acquitted. But though they eluded earthly justice, they did not escape the hand of an overruling Providence. The priest, who encouraged the mob, fell down dead at the altar on the following Sunday; and Messrs. Farrell, from being the most extensive and opulent merchants in the city, were shortly reduced to extreme poverty. So sudden was the change in their affairs that the case was frequently referred to by their own people, to show the danger of religious persecution.

To return to Mr. Wesley. At Cork he held a solemn watch-night service, and left the city with much satisfaction, having seen some fruit of his labours. At Bandon the congregations were such as he had not seen in the town for twenty years. This success he attributed to the labours of William Collins, "who is," he says, "another proof that at present a prophet is not without honour even in his own country." During this year a youth of sixteen was converted in Bandon, and joined the Methodists, amongst whom he subsequently occupied a prominent position. Thomas Bennett was certainly a pillar in the Church. For seventy-two years he walked with God, and amidst the business and other duties of life, uniformly exhibited the Christian character. With fidelity and acceptance he sustained the offices of steward, leader, and trustee. His attachment to Methodism was unwavering, and his contributions to support the cause liberal.* He is still remembered by a few in the town, who in their youth thought him somewhat uncouth in speech, and very strict in discipline, yet withal genial and generous.

At Limerick Wesley found a settled, serious people, but in danger of sinking into formality. All the members of the select Society once experienced salvation from sin, some continued to enjoy the blessing, but the greater part were more or less shorn of their strength. Here William Myles, a young man of seventeen, one of Wesley's hearers, was strongly impressed with what he heard, and led earnestly to seek the pardon of his sins. Soon after he was received into the Society, and five years subsequently entered the itinerancy.

At Newmarket Romanists and Protestants flocked together from every side, and for the time appeared to be greatly affected. At Clare where there was no Society, and next to no congregation until the soldiers came, Wesley was glad to accept a bed in the barracks. At Galway he preached in the courthouse to a large and well-conducted congregation. At Castlebar, on finding the charter school a picture of slothfulness, nastiness and desolation, and all the children dirty, untidy, and neglected, he reported the facts to the trustees,

* *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1845, p. 1232.

with the hope of effecting a reformation. At Sligo the congregations, rich and poor, were so large and so remarkably serious, that he had "a faint hope of seeing some fruit even in this cold and barren town." At Manorhamilton the audience was numerous and attentive.

At Swanlinbar there was a large number of hearers, mostly experienced Christians, and still more on the following morning; but the grand concourse was on that evening, when the hearts of the people were as wax melting before the fire. The curate in the town then was the Rev. James Creighton, A.B., who in 1765 had been ordained by Dr. Cradock, Bishop of Kilmore, whose first counsel to him to "say nothing at all about faith in his sermons," was by no means calculated to advance his holiness or promote his success. He had been meditating a sermon against the Methodists, but very wisely before executing his purpose, sought light on the subject, by sending a series of questions to Mr. Wesley, to which concise answers were sent, together with a copy of the "Appeal to Men of Reason." These eventually proved the means in the hand of God of leading Mr. Creighton to seek and find the blessings of salvation, and to his becoming thoroughly identified with Methodism.

On May 24th Mr. Wesley, having preached at Tonymonan, set out for Sidaire, accompanied by the circuit ministers, Jas. Hudson, John Watson, and Michael M'Donald. One of his horses having a shoe loose, he borrowed Mr. Watson's steed, and left him with his chaise. Having to pass through Enniskillen, when the itinerants came near the town, some masons at work at the west bridge gave them some coarse words. The vituperation increased as they proceeded, but many soldiers being in the street, who received the preachers with respect, the mob shrunk back. An hour later Mr. Watson followed in the carriage; but before he arrived at the bridge, which had been blocked up with large stones, many ran together and began to pelt him with whatever came to hand, but an old man cried out: "Is this the way you treat strangers?" and rolled away the stones. The mob quickly rewarded him by plastering him over with mortar from head to foot. They then fell upon the chaise, which was cut with stones in several places, and well-nigh covered with dirt and mortar. From one end of the

town to the other, the stones flew thick about the coachman's head, some of which were two or three pounds weight.

Next day the preachers returned from Sidaire *en route* to Roosky, and as they passed the eastern end of Ennis-killen, both men and women greeted them with abusive language, together with dirt and stones; but the steeds of the itinerants soon left their persecutors far behind. John Smith came to the town about an hour later. The masons at the west bridge having seen him approaching, prepared at once for an onslaught. He was afraid that his horse would leap into the river, and therefore having alighted, made his way through the midst of them as best he could, much wounded.

At Derg-bridge Wesley found the minister and people waiting for him; but the church could not near contain them, so he preached to a mixed multitude of rich and poor—Episcopalians, Presbyterians and Romanists—in the open-air. He then rode to Mrs. Johnstone's, Lisleen, where, after tea, he was told another congregation was waiting, to whom he preached, without further delay, warning them "of the madness which was spreading among them" in desiring to leave the Church. At Londonderry no less than five of the local clergy attended the service each evening. "One would have imagined," he says, "from this friendliness of the clergy, joined with the good-will of the Bishop and the Dean, the Society would increase swiftly; but in fact it does not increase at all; it stands just as it was two years ago; so little does the favour of man advance the work of God." At Fahan he preached "to a serious, artless congregation." Here he was the guest of a widow lady, whose son, the Rev. John Abraham, chaplain to the Chapel-of-Ease, Londonderry, was after some time brought to the saving knowledge of Christ, and then stood forth valiantly for the truth, preaching it with great force, earnestness and fidelity.

At New Buildings Wesley found the Society "as lively as ever, and more exactly regular than any other Society in these parts." At Castlecaulfield he preached to a numerous congregation on the green, and again in the evening near the barracks at Charlemont. At Armagh the audiences in the avenue were very large and exceedingly serious, rich and poor kneeling

down together on the grass while he engaged in prayer. Here he wrote his invaluable sermon on "Predestination," which he had preached at the request of several of the clergy. Having discoursed at Clonmain and other places in this neighbourhood, he came to Derryanvil, where were some of the liveliest Christians he had seen in the kingdom, eight of whom testified that they had never lost the evidence, nor felt any declension since the time they were perfected in love. At Tanderagee the congregation was exceedingly numerous, the day concluded with a meeting of the Societies, assembled from all the surrounding country, and great was their rejoicing, many were filled with consolation, and not a few feeble hands were strengthened.

At Lisburn Mrs. Gayer, for the first time after her conversion, had an opportunity of hearing Mr. Wesley preach, which she greatly enjoyed. At the close of the service she was introduced to him, and he, having obtained her address, said that he would call and see her. Knowing the strong feeling Mr. Gayer had against Methodism, and fearing the reception Mr. Wesley would receive from him, she, with her daughter, made it a subject of special prayer during most of that night, that the Lord would dispose the heart of her husband to receive the servant of God graciously. On the following day Mr. Wesley walked out to Derryaghy from Lisburn, and met Mr. Gayer in the avenue leading to his residence. The former inquired if Mrs. Gayer lived in that house, the latter replied, "Yes, she is my wife," and entered into conversation with Mr. Wesley, not knowing who he was. Mr. Gayer was much impressed with the culture and gentlemanly deportment of the stranger, felt drawn towards him at once, and invited him to dinner. Thus prejudices were completely removed, and arrangements made for regular preaching at Derryaghy; which, being commenced by Mr. Wesley before a large congregation on that very day, was subsequently continued in a place fitted up for the purpose by Mr. Gayer at his own expense. Not only was a room set apart in the house for the preachers, called "the Prophet's Chamber," but they were also kindly and hospitably entertained, at regular intervals, for many years.

At Newtownards the hearers in the new market-house were most attentive, especially the backsliders, several of whom determined to return to their heavenly Father. In Belfast the audience was numerous, but trifling enough ; yet by degrees became serious. At Carrickfergus there was a lovely congregation in the shire hall, very large and earnest, several were added to the Society, and Wesley was not without hope that there was seed sown here that would never be rooted up. At Ballymena he was kindly offered the use of the meeting-house, where all that could get in were closely stowed together. He declared "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" to a loving people at Ballinderry, many of whom experienced this blessing, and many more felt their need of it. In Dublin he had left three hundred and seventy-eight members, and now found four hundred and twelve, many of whom were truly alive to God. On July the 5th he embarked for England, having spent a little more than three months in this country.

The good cause continued to prosper much, especially in the north. Many souls were saved, the spiritual life of the Societies was deepened, and the net addition to the membership in the province of Ulster alone, during the twelve months, was nine hundred and forty-one. These statistics, as well as others already given, are not, however, to be regarded as presenting anything like an adequate idea of the results of the labours of the itinerants. It was computed that in this and five preceding years, the north of Ireland was drained of one-fourth of its population by emigration to the American settlements. These emigrants were chiefly from the agricultural districts, where Methodism had proved most successful.

During the remainder of the year a few brief glimpses are given of the itinerants earnestly and successfully at work in leading sinners to the Saviour, and in opening new and important fields of Christian usefulness. Thus at Limerick, several days in the autumn were set apart for fasting and prayer, which not only proved solemn and refreshing seasons to all, and especially the young men who were greatly stirred up, but also led to several being added to the membership ; some converted, and others renewed in love.

Once when John Smith went to Gortnaleg, he was so

hoarse that he could not speak above a whisper. He knew not what to do when he saw Peter Taylor's large barn filled with people hungering for the Bread of Life, and he groaned within himself. At length he said with intense earnestness: "Lord, be Thou wisdom and utterance to Thy poor, weary, and afflicted servant, and speak by Thy Spirit to this people." Immediately all the people fell on their knees and pleaded for a present blessing. Meanwhile, John Smith continued wrestling with God, until nineteen souls were led to the Saviour.

Thomas Payne, a brave soldier of the Cross, who was appointed to labour on the Armagh circuit, says that the damp, dirty, smoky cabins of Ulster were a great trial to him; but what made amends for all these inconveniences was, that the people in general were the most zealous, lively and affectionate Christians in the kingdom.

An inroad was made into the neighbourhood of Stranorlar. That part of the country seemed to be in the peaceable possession of the god of this world, with none to dispute his authority, until visited by the preachers. Rumours began to circulate that the Methodists were about to come to the district, and everything that is evil was stated of them. Some asserted that they were the false prophets and false Christs, foretold by the Saviour; while others began to examine their Bibles to see if these things were so, and a few thought the Methodists were right; but the majority affirmed that it was not fit that such fellows should live. One of the earliest to preach here was Geo. Brown from Creevy, and a great congregation assembled. As they returned home the curate of the parish met them, and reproached the people in strong terms for going to hear "illiterate, designing impostors, who had no end in view but corrupting and debasing men's minds." Notwithstanding this opposition, several were converted and became members of the Society.

It was also about this period we discover the first trace of a footing gained by Methodism in Portadown. A member of the Society at Kilmoriarty, named Samuel Lisk, removed into the town, and opened his house to receive the preachers; but it does not appear that any society was formed for some time, and he therefore maintained his connection with the class at his previous home. In his house Mr. J. M'Neese, Mr. T.

Payne, and other devoted men declared the truth as it is in Jesus, and not a little opposition was stirred up, which does not seem, however, to have gone further than the infliction of petty annoyances. After some time Lisk removed to a distant part of the country, and a stable, kindly lent by an innkeeper named Gardiner, was the only place which could be procured for religious services.

In Charlemont the Society and congregation so increased that a larger house was felt to be indispensable. So just at the right time, an all-wise Providence enabled Mr. Bates to secure a suitable site, and obtain financial help, so that a chapel was completed before Christmas, and opened by Barnabas Thomas, one of the circuit preachers.

Chapter XXV.

1774.

At this period a lady was brought into connection with Methodism, who subsequently did a glorious work for Christ. Mrs. Agnes Smyth was the daughter of William Higginson, Esq., of Lisburn; and thus was one of a family which, for more than a century-and-a-half, has occupied a leading position in that town and neighbourhood. Brought up in circumstances of affluence, and surrounded by those whose lives were strictly moral, she was from earliest years the subject of the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit. Even when a little child she felt that God loved her and she loved Him, and was wont with unquestioning confidence to look to Him in prayer for relief in every trouble, and not in vain. She became most careful to do what appeared her duty; read at least two chapters of the Bible every day; and attended the services of the parish church with the utmost regularity. As, however, she grew older, and entered into the fashionable amusements of the world, these good impressions passed away, and she became gay, vain and thoughtless.

In 1770 Miss Higginson, being then but a girl of fifteen,

was married to the Rev. Edward Smyth, a clergyman who had many wealthy and influential relatives, through whose assistance the young couple expected to succeed in life, but were sadly disappointed. One of those from whom they had expected much, Dr. F. A. Smyth, Archbishop of Dublin, died in December, 1771, without having either given his nephew a benefice, or left him a bequest. This disappointment led Mr. Smyth to look out for a curacy, in quest of which he, with his wife, went to Dublin, where, in the house of his brother, Wm. Smyth, Esq., Mrs. Smyth first met some members of the Methodist Society. The religious views and practices of these people were utterly opposed to all her previous ideas. The profession of a conscious sense of sins forgiven seemed to her "proud and presumptuous;" and preaching without episcopal ordination, "strange and unlawful." However she was led to search the Scriptures to see "whether these things were so." Through conversation with these servants of God her mind was awakened to a sense of her fallen state by nature, and the consequent necessity of a change of heart; but she did not venture to attend any of the services of the sect then almost "everywhere spoken against." Meantime her husband did not succeed in getting a suitable position as soon as was anticipated; and her mother, to whom she was very fondly attached, died. Thus one trouble followed another; but these disappointments and trials were greatly sanctified and blessed. At length, in December, 1773, Mr. Smyth obtained the curacy of Ballyculter, in the county of Down, and removed thither in the following year. Their house not being ready for their reception, they were kindly invited by Lord Bangor to Castle Ward; but the fashionable and frivolous amusements of their temporary home were so utterly distasteful, that neither Mrs. Smyth nor her husband could be prevailed upon to join in them. The Lord was thus preparing them for Christian work, of which we shall hear more again.

The persecution on the Enniskillen circuit, to which reference has been made, at length grew so violent that its malignity compelled the reluctant authorities to take active measures for the preservation of life and property, but not until they had found that their own persons and possessions were in danger.

Then the magistrates began to manifest some sympathy with the persecuted Christians, and severe punishment was inflicted on the violators of the law. Many of those who had taken a leading part in the persecution sought to escape the consequences of their misdeeds by emigration or by enlisting in the army, while others, to veil their former conduct, became zealous in running with the altered tide of popular feeling.

But this fierce and terrible persecution did not end until after John Smith had fallen a victim to its violence. In 1774, as the devoted evangelist rode to Charlemont to attend the March quarterly meeting, a man named Nixon, a bailiff to a gentleman at Aghintain, near Clogher, waylaid and struck him on the back of the head with a pitchfork, knocking him down, and then so maltreated him as to leave him apparently dead. But so intent was he on doing his Master's work that, weak and suffering as he was, he managed to get to Charlemont for the service, and there became so exhausted that he was obliged to retire to the house of a kind widow, a Mrs. Richardson, where he lingered for a few days. For some time he was in great distress of mind ; but soon the clouds were dispelled, and his soul was filled with joy unspeakable. His pain of body was great, but the love of Christ so overflowed his heart as at times to render him almost insensible to bodily sufferings. For about twelve hours he scarcely ceased praising and glorifying God, until his room was a very heaven on earth. At length, as nature gradually sank, Samuel Bates repeated the words: " Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word : for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation ;" and the spirit of the saint passed hence to join the glorious company " which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Many who heard the dying testimony of this devoted Christian were led thereby to religious decision, and thus in death as in life he glorified God. John Smith " fell in the heat of the battle vanquished, and yet a conqueror." The body of this earnest worker was carried to the new chapel. Solemn and impressive services were held, at which many were " baptized for the dead." The remains were then interred in the old graveyard at Leger hill : in what precise part cannot now be determined,

as there is not even a stone to mark the place. But his "record is on high;" and his memorial is found in the many who have been led to the Saviour as the result of his devoted life.

Although open opposition thus ceased, the Society began to suffer from what proved to be much more injurious to its well-being, internal discord. The celebrated Calvinistic controversy now extended to Ireland, and its pernicious effects were increased by a misapprehension of the Arminian doctrines as stated by some of the preachers. In Dublin discontent arose. "I have been credibly informed," says Mrs. Paul, wife of the Dean of Cashel, in writing to the Countess of Huntingdon, "that great dissatisfaction prevails among Mr. Wesley's people, owing chiefly to the influence which Mr. Fletcher's book has on the preaching of the ministers of the Society. Of this book I know nothing but from report. It appears, however, to have unsettled the minds of many, from what I can learn; and a few have left the Society in consequence of it." The opportunity was considered favourable by Calvinistic Methodists for disseminating their opinions in this country. "I am at my wit's end," writes the zealous Countess, to Mr. Hawkesworth, her preacher in the metropolis, "to find help for the people of Ireland. A student from the College shall go immediately, you will then be able to visit some of the large towns, whilst he remains with the people in Dublin; but I am in great hopes of sending some who may get admittance to the churches, perhaps Mr. Venn, Mr. Madan, or Mr. Talbot. I shall write to them without delay, and inform them of this opening."*

Accordingly the Rev. Thomas Jones was sent over. Soon after his arrival Mr. Hawkesworth visited Limerick and Waterford; and at the latter place met with considerable encouragement, which induced him to prolong his stay. Mrs. Bennis happened to be in the city at the time, and gave Mr. Wesley a sad account of the state of the Society there. By the frequent neglect of preaching, and the almost total neglect of discipline, the people were scattered; and of the few that remained some were grieved, and some offended with the

* *Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon*, II., p. 165.

new doctrine of salvation by works that they considered was preached. Then Mr. Hawkesworth held his services at the same hours as those of the Methodists, and they were largely attended by many, including not a few of the Society, though warned not to go and hear him. When Mrs. Bennis called on him, and charged him with taking advantage of the disturbed state of the Society, to widen the breach, and gather all to himself, he indirectly acknowledged that this was his motive in coming.

Mr. Wesley in reply said: "I enclose James Perfect's letter to you, on purpose that you may talk with him; he has both an honest heart and a good understanding; but you entirely mistake his doctrine. He preaches salvation by faith in the same manner that my brother and I have done; and as Mr. Fletcher has beautifully explained it. None of us talk of being accepted for our works: that is the Calvinist slander. But we all maintain, we are not saved without works; that works are a condition (though not the meritorious cause) of final salvation. It is by faith in the righteousness and blood of Christ that we are enabled to do all good works; and it is for the sake of these, that all who fear God and work righteousness are accepted of Him. It is far better for our people not to hear Mr. Hawkesworth. Calvinism will do them no good; as to the rest I refer to my enclosure to Mr. M'Donald, with whom I wish you to have some conversation. Be not discouraged, I really believe God will visit poor Waterford in love; do you go on; bear up the hands that hang down; by faith and prayer support the tottering knee; reprove, encourage. Storm the throne of grace, and persevere therein, and mercy will come down." *

This clear, seasonable and earnest epistle, together with its enclosures, no doubt exercised an influence for good on both preachers and hearers in the city; but the evil done could not be completely undone. Among those lost to the Society through this controversy was one whose name deserves more than a passing notice, Mr. William Scroder. His parents were respectable, and when a youth, his careless, reckless spirit was

* Christian Correspondence, pp. 69-71.

a source of great pain and anxiety to them. About the year 1760 a privateer was fitted out at Waterford, and he, being then eighteen years of age, with others entered on board her. They had not left the port many days when, after a sharp action, a French vessel was captured, with which they were returning, when a violent storm arose in which both privateer and prize were lost; but the lives of the crew saved, almost miraculously. This providential deliverance had a salutary effect on William's mind, and from it resulted those religious impressions which led to his conversion. He became a member of the Society, and an active and acceptable leader and local preacher. His talents were not brilliant; but his spirit was earnest, his style quaint, and his life in harmony with the principles he inculcated. At this period he embraced Calvinistic opinions, withdrew from the Society, and continued for many years to preach in rooms in the city to a few followers who were warmly attached to himself and his religious views.

How long Mr. Hawkesworth remained at Waterford is uncertain; but he was succeeded by Mr. Jones, and others in Lady Huntingdon's Connexion. They likewise visited other places, and were instrumental in laying the foundation of congregations at Cork and Sligo. At the latter, not only were the views of Mr. Maiben, the leading member of the Society, Calvinistic, but also those of the Assistant, Mr. Christian; and through their influence the town was visited by Mr. Hawkesworth. Thus a separate body was formed, from which eventually arose the present Congregationalist church. So powerful was the influence of the Calvinists, that even Charles Graham was led for a time to embrace the doctrine of a limited atonement; but soon came back to the people of his early choice.

When Mrs. Bennis returned to Limerick in April, she found the Society there also rent and torn, "for the most trifling matters that can be conceived." Mr. Wrigley, who had been in Cork, and exchanged with Mr. Hern, was now Assistant of Limerick. He was abrupt and imperious in his manner, a strict disciplinarian, rather inclined to stand on his official dignity, and of unbending integrity; yet withal having a kind heart. He had evidently come into collision with the young men of the Society, written a vehement letter to Mr.

Wesley, and expressed his determination to put them out if they did not acknowledge their fault. Mr. Wesley quietly replied, "I never put any out of our Society for anything they say of me."

Mr. Wrigley, however, was succeeded by Mr. G. Snowden, who soon gained the love and esteem of all the people, and peace and harmony prevailed. The select bands set apart some days to wrestle with God for a revival, and not in vain. On July 21st Mrs. Bennis writes: "By a letter from Mr. M'Donald I learn the work of God is prospering in the county of Wexford; but in Waterford they are still lifeless. We have proposed to them, and all the country Societies on this and that round, to set apart the first of next month as a day of fasting and prayer, solely on their behalf. Perhaps the Lord will be entreated and cause the dry bones to live." Five months later she writes again from Limerick: "The work of God goes on blessedly here under Mr. Snowden and Mr. M'Donald; we have indeed happy meetings both in public and in private. The Lord is also at work in Waterford, and in most of our country Societies; but as you have got an account of these I need not recapitulate." *

There were in Dublin at this period two young men, Matthias Joyce and Bennett Dugdale, fellow apprentices in Mr. Exshaw's printing establishment. Joyce had been a Roman Catholic, but influenced by curiosity had gone to hear Mr. Wesley preach, and was so impressed that he returned to the services. This, together with the reading of a tract which an all-wise Providence had placed in his hands, led him to renounce Popery. Both he and Dugdale were brought under deep conviction of sin, and went to Mr. Jaco, the Assistant in the city, who spoke to them faithfully and lovingly, and gave them notes of admission into the Society, saying: "The Lord write your names in the Lamb's book of life." Joyce subsequently entered the itinerancy, and Dugdale became a most acceptable and useful leader and local preacher for many years.

At this time Mr. Pritchard had charge of the Newry round, where, he says, they gathered in some hundreds from the

* Christian Correspondence, pp. 76-77.

barren mountains. He received efficient help from Mrs. Gayer, who engaged heartily in work for her Redeemer. One of her first cares was to secure the erection of a chapel in Lisburn, where there was none, the services being conducted in private houses. This was accomplished in the course of twelve months, chiefly through her assistance; and during the year no less than seventy persons were added to the Society in the town and neighbourhood.

Mr. M'Nab was the Assistant on the Londonderry circuit, where the Lord was pleased to bless him in increasing and strengthening the Society. An opportunity having been obtained for preaching at Newtownlimavady,* through the Divine blessing on his ministry, Mrs. Martha M'Gee was enabled to rejoice in a sin-pardoning God, and became a member of the Society. She was called the "Mother of Methodism in Newtownlimavady," being one of its first members, and for sixty years one of its most active and faithful supporters. So consistent was her conduct that even the enemies of the truth were constrained to acknowledge the genuineness of her piety.

Notwithstanding the serious losses in membership sustained during this year, in Dublin nearly one hundred by discord, and in Enniskillen upwards of two hundred by persecution, there was a net increase in Ireland of three hundred and twenty-eight, chiefly on the Armagh, Londonderry, and Newry circuits.

Of the many rescued from Popery, through the Divine blessing on the labours of Methodism in Ireland, the name of Anne Devlin should have more than a passing notice. Born in the county of Fermanagh, she was in early years the subject of the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, and in answer to earnest prayer obtained a sense of sins forgiven; but in an evil moment she yielded to the strong pressure brought to bear on her, again went to mass, and thus lost her confidence. The state of this young woman now became terrible. She fell into utter despair, more than once was on the verge of putting an end to her miserable life, and was at length taken to the priest, and afterwards to the bishop. The former said, that when

* Now called Limavady.

these melancholy notions were out of her mind, all would be well ; and advised her to take pleasure in the world, to keep jovial company, and to be sure to dance a great deal ; adding, " A shilling to the priest, and a few days in purgatory, will do away with all." The bishop spoke much to the same effect, anointed her with oil, and then threw the tow that he had used into the fire, saying : " The witchcraft is all over ! " But the bitter anguish was still there : and the poor girl, having done wrong, instead of going back to the Source of peace, wandered further from God, plunged deeper in sin, and thus bound herself more firmly to Satan.

In this state Anne remained until she was twenty-one years of age, when she heard a sermon preached by Mr. James Perfect, who was then stationed on the Enniskillen circuit. Under the preaching of the word a gleam of hope once more entered her mind ; she began again to pray, and her spiritual distress returned. On reaching home her friends offered to send for the priest, but she told them it was of no use, unless to tell him of her lost state. She continued thus in deep distress for about twelve months, when the Lord once more revealed Himself in tender compassion, set her soul at liberty, and gave her the assurance that He had healed all her backslidings.

Two years later (1774) she resolved publicly to renounce all connection with Popery ; having heard which, the priest sent her word that he would " tear her out of the Church, and make hawk's meat of her." But she answered that God was above him, and through Divine grace she feared neither him nor the Pope. Mr. Skelton having removed from the parish, she applied to his successor to be received into the Church : and he, having heard her say that she knew her sins were pardoned, exclaimed, " Alas ! alas ! the poor widow's daughter is gone mad. Go home, my girl, to your mother." She then went to another clergyman—probably Mr. Skelton—who approved of her resolution, and having given proper directions and promised his protection in case of persecution, wrote to the minister of her own parish to comply with her request.

Numerous methods were employed to try to turn the young convert aside from the right way. The old priest was brought

to see and reason with her. He said that none could be saved out of their Church, and that all heretics were on their way to hell; but she expressed her determination never to return to Popery. On another occasion Anne's mother and some friends arranged to get her married by force, without acquainting her of their intention, and they had even fixed the time; but on the morning of the day decided on, a younger sister told Anne of the plot, and she fled for her life. The mental anxiety through which she then passed, together with the fatigue and exhaustion of her journey, brought on an attack of fever, which when the people in whose house she had sought refuge discovered, they would not permit her to remain. So she was obliged to return home. On coming back her mother refused to receive her unless she would yield. This, however, she declined to do, choosing rather the rude shelter of a poor cabin, where, with scarcely any attention or sustenance, through the Divine blessing she recovered.

Friendless and homeless Anne then wandered about from place to place, supporting herself by knitting and other kinds of work, until her health began to decline, in consequence of the privations and persecutions she had to endure. The Lord then raised up many friends amongst His people: more especially Mrs. Johnstone, of Lisleen, who, having heard of her circumstances, received her as a sister, and thus afforded her a holy and happy home.

Mr. James Dickson, of Charlemont, a man whose heart glowed with love to Christ, and yearned over sinners, in all the zeal and tenderness of his first love, went to Dungormon to the wake of some neighbour or friend, and there, amid many who, according to the then and still too prevalent practice, had met for worldly mirth, he stood up valiantly for God. The Holy Spirit accompanied the word faithfully spoken, and amongst those who "were pricked in their hearts" was a Mrs. Frizzell. From the deep seriousness apparent in many countenances, Mr. Dickson felt encouraged to follow up the good work. Accordingly, he and another man, named Verner, like-minded with himself, shortly after returned, to exhort and hold meetings for prayer. Many tokens for good followed, and they were led to attempt the formation of a class. They

appear to have set about the work in the right spirit and in the right way. They went to all whom they thought desirous "to flee from the wrath to come;" spoke to them individually on the subject of their salvation, and, being very much in earnest, their words were attended with all the weight of felt truth. Amongst others, they visited Mrs. Frizzell, and told her their own experience of the knowledge of salvation, which then, though only a revived gospel truth, appeared to her, and to others generally, quite a new Methodistic doctrine. Their visit was not without some effect, for she was induced to attend the meeting of the class, though at the risk of being scorned and mocked by the ungodly. The service was rather protracted that morning; for the good men, being in the spirit of winning souls to Christ, took no note of time. But Mrs. Frizzell was a punctual woman, and as the hour of her usual Sabbath service drew near, remembering that she had a long walk to the meeting-house, she left before the class ended. After she had gone, it was painfully suggested to her mind that she had insulted the good men, and this temptation so haunted and harassed her the whole of the following week that she resolved not to return to class the next Sabbath morning. The devoted evangelists, however, who watched over her soul, on missing her, immediately went to visit her, and spoke so of the love of Christ to her as a lost and wandering sheep, that, as she said, "they quite won her by love." This proved the turning-point in her life. She returned to the neglected service, and there she soon experienced the peace and gladness of all that believe. Her soul was thus made exultingly happy in God her Saviour, and from that hour she never for one day, during an unusually protracted life, lost her first love: her Sun never set, or withdrew His light from her soul. In her own limited and humble sphere, Mrs. Frizzell engaged in work for her Master. She met a class for many years, in the discharge of the duties of which she manifested that vigilance, tenderness, and zeal which nothing but close and constant communion with God can produce and sustain. Her wisdom and piety drew many around her for spiritual counsel, which was ever given with cordial promptitude and unaffected lowliness of spirit. She was also especially endeared to the young,

whom, as the lambs of the flock, she carried to God in earnest, believing prayer ; and many of them grew up to maturity, filled important positions in the Church, and gratefully embalmed her memory in their hearts.

In the Derg country the work prospered greatly, meetings were held in all directions, the young men especially labouring with much zeal and success. George Brown having recovered from a serious illness, resumed his happy toil, walking hundreds of miles to preach, and seeing much fruit to his labours. He refers amongst others to one meeting that he held, when there being no house large enough to contain the audience, he preached "by moonlight" to a great congregation near Strabane, and the Lord gave His enriching blessing. The most influential of those converted at this period was Alexander Boyle, Esq., of Kirlish Lodge, who did much by his godly example, Christian efforts, and generous liberality to extend the cause of vital religion. For a period of twenty years this district of country was indeed a "school of the prophets," giving to the Methodist ministry a host of devoted and gifted men. George and Hugh Brown, Hugh Moore, John and Thomas Kerr, Thomas Owens, John Harper, Matthew Stewart, A. Hamilton, sen., Robert and James Smith, Robert M'Coy, and Samuel Steele, were all men of this place and period.

John Price was on the Enniskillen circuit, and with characteristic zeal and enterprise he extended his labours beyond his appointed sphere. In the neighbourhood of Ballyshannon the people were irreligious and immoral, almost to a proverb, their principal amusements being hunting, horse-racing, gambling, and cock-fighting, which generally were accompanied by scenes of drunkenness and strife. The first place in this part of the country into which Methodism was introduced was Cloghore, near Belleek, and Mr. Price was the honoured instrument. Under his faithful ministrations of the word of life John Fitzpatrick and his wife and three others were led to give their hearts to God. The good work rapidly extended to the adjoining townland of Carricknahorna, where John Myles had the privilege of receiving the messenger of mercy. The first class consisted of seven persons, all of whom, having lived in the fear of the Lord, died leaving a blessed testimony of the power of Christ Jesus to forgive sins.

While one of the itinerants was preaching in the open-air at Aughnacloy, a young man of seventeen, Jackson Horner, brother of the preacher, was convinced of sin, and soon after obtained a sense of pardon. He became a member of the Society, provided a room for the preachers, and was thus the means of re-introducing Methodism into the town. He also sustained the office of a leader for sixty-seven years with fidelity and success.

Mr. Pritchard was stationed on the Armagh circuit, where he found that the labours of his predecessors had been greatly blessed ; but he had much to discourage him. The brother appointed to labour with him was not able to fill his appointment, so he was left without help. Fearing lest the work should suffer he made it a subject of special prayer, and laboured to the utmost of his strength, and the Lord continued to vouchsafe His blessing, increasing the number and the holiness of the people ; thus fulfilling the assurance, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be."

Chapter XXV. I.

1775.

THE Rev. Edward Smyth of Ballyculter, now became more evangelical in his views and pointed in his preaching, which his brother clergy soon learned and objected to in a way that did not show much respect for the Word of God. Thus in a conversation between him and the Dean of Down, the former having quoted one or two texts of Scripture in support of his opinions, the Dean promptly replied, "Let us have no Scripture introduced, the less of that the better!" *

Early in the spring of 1775 Mrs. Smyth went on a visit to her father at Lisburn. Here she attended the parish church three Sundays in succession, longing to hear something of the death and merits of the Saviour ; but in the three discourses she only heard His name mentioned once. Grieved at heart, she

* The Religion of the Heart Delineated, p. 47.

thought it was wrong for her to let fear keep her from the Methodist services, where she might hope for the needed instruction. The obstacles were great; her pride resented association with a despised people; her husband did not wish it; and her father forbade it, at the peril of forfeiting his favour. But a deep sense of duty impelled her onward. She determined to go: and went, blushing with shame, hiding herself when there, and then hurrying away at the close of the service, lest she might be recognised. Having informed Mr. Smyth of what she had done, and found to her joy that he not only withdrew his objection, but even gave his consent, she went again with more courage. Now she joined heartily in the service, which shame had prevented her from doing before; and heard Mr. Payne preach from Jeremiah xxiii. 29, a sermon, every sentence of which seemed to go home with convincing power to her heart.

Having a strong impression that she should cast in her lot with this people, she was led to attend the services frequently. On one occasion Mrs. Gayer invited her to accompany her to Mrs. Cumberland's. "No," thought Mrs. Smyth, "or I shall be for ever called 'a Swaddler,'" and declined. But Mrs. Gayer would not be put off, and did not let her go until she consented. Here she met a few devoted servants of God in Christian fellowship, which was greatly blessed to her, and at once became a member of the Society.

Soon after this Mrs. Smyth, one Lord's day, was made unspeakably happy. The Lord by His Holy Spirit revealed to her so clearly the condition of salvation by faith in a crucified Saviour, that she was lost in amazement at His boundless love. So marked was the change, that on going downstairs her friends at once observed it. "Why, Nussy," said her sister, "I have not seen you look so well this great while;" and no wonder, for her soul was filled with joy. "All I knew," she says, "was, that I loved my Saviour above all things, and that He loved me; which conviction I thought I would not forego for all the world, as it seemed dearer to me than life itself." This heavenly joy continued, and Divine light shone into her soul, the Scriptures being wonderfully opened to her understanding and applied to her heart.

On April the 2nd Mr. Wesley landed at Dunleary, and proceeded at once to Dublin, where he was the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Smyth. On examining the Society he found the membership exactly the same in number—three hundred and seventy-six—as it had been two years previously ; but there was more peace and love than there had been for many years. While in the metropolis he took the opportunity of waiting on the Countess of Moira, notwithstanding the long and bitter controversy which had just taken place, in which her venerable mother took so deep and practical an interest. At the request of “the good old Dean,” he also assisted in administering the Lord’s supper in St. Patrick’s.

Wesley remained eight days in Dublin, and then began his tour through the provinces. He preached at Edenderry, and accompanied by Messrs. M’Nab and Bradford, came to Tyrrell’s Pass, where he met Messrs. Wride, Hern, and Floyd, the circuit ministers, and where he preached to a large congregation with much power, met the Society, and administered the Lord’s supper. At Longford a chapel had been built in the previous year, and a great number of the people attended the service ; but he found very little of the spirit which had been there two years before. At Athlone on Sunday, the 16th, Mr. M’Nab preached at five in the morning, and Mr. Wesley at eight and at half-past five, and afterwards held a love-feast. Having visited Aughrim and Eyrecourt, he preached at Birr, with a good hope that God would at length revive His work in the town. At Clara, where he was the guest of A. Armstrong, Esq., J.P.,* he occupied the market-place, the people attended eagerly from the market, and there was no buying or selling during the service. At Coolalough he preached twice and met the Society ; at Tullamore he had a large congregation ; and at Portarlinton, “still unstable as water,” he preached and met the Society. At Mountmellick on Sunday, the 23rd, Mr. Bradford preached early in the morning ; and Mr. Wesley at nine and at five, and afterwards met the Society and administered the Lord’s supper. At Maryborough he read prayers in the church, and preached to a

* Son-in-law of S. S. Simpson, Esq., J.P., of Oatfield.

numerous audience, which seemed much affected. At Kilkenny he was shocked at the smallness and deadness of the congregation, which was a little revived on the next evening, but not much; so on going away he left Mr. Hern behind him to preach there, which he says he did with much freedom to large audiences.*

At Waterford the rain drove the people into the preaching house, "the most foul, horrid, miserable hole," says Wesley, "which I have seen since I left England!" But the next day he got out into the open air, and a large congregation attended. He had intended to leave on the following morning, but as he saw a good many Highlanders present, and thought he might not have such another opportunity of addressing them, he remained another day in the city.

By a singular coincidence, just eleven days after the death of his old but faithless friend, the Rev. R. Lloyd, Wesley arrived again at Rathcormack. He had a long drive of more than forty miles, and not being able to obtain accommodation in the inn, was obliged to proceed nearly twenty more to Cork. Here he was much pleased with the state of the cause, the congregations were large and deeply attentive, the singing such as he had seldom heard before, and the Society increased both spiritually and numerically. At Bandon he preached in the Main street, and found the Society here likewise much established in grace, and greatly increased in numbers. This he ascribed to God's blessing on the labours of John Bristol and George Snowden, "two plain men, who put forth all their strength in His work."

At Limerick, about six weeks previously, Mr. M'Donald, the preacher stationed on the circuit, having taken ill of fever, while delirious in the absence of his nurse, jumped out of the window of his room into the yard at the reer of the preaching house, and died in half-an-hour. In this city Wesley preached to a large congregation of Catholics and Protestants in the yard of the custom-house, where many could hear within as well as without. On examining the Society he found it to consist of one hundred and one persons, being seven less than two years

* Unpublished Diary of J. Hern.

previously. At Newmarket he had a deeply serious audience ; at Galway a more civil and attentive congregation than he had ever seen there before ; and at Ballinrobe an auditory that in number and seriousness surprised him.

When Mr. Wesley reached Sligo he saw the sad havoc the Calvinistic controversy had made ; finding himself disowned by former friends, the Society but the wreck of what it had been, and the preaching room in the hands of others. Notwithstanding the smallness of their numbers, the prospects of this Society soon looked more hopeful : for the little company left were as much alive to God and more united than ever. A preaching house was soon after erected in Bridge street, a small and tumble-down structure, with a thatched roof, so low that some years subsequently when Mr. R. Banks was stationed on the circuit, being tall of stature, a hole had to be made in the earthen floor to enable him to stand erect !

At Swanlinbar, knowing that a large part of the congregation had tasted of the powers of the world to come, Wesley spoke on the glory that should be revealed, and they seemed deeply affected. At Belturbet he preached in the town hall, and the Lord opened the windows of heaven, and showered His blessing down. At Clones, where he was entertained by Richard Kelso, the service was held in the old Danish fort, and the largest audience he had seen in the kingdom assembled to hear. The Society had been strengthened by the accession of a few of the more respectable inhabitants, including a young gentleman named Armstrong, who left by will forty pounds, to assist in the erection of a chapel ; a brother of his, who subsequently removed to Dublin, was also identified with the cause ; and a young lady named Bradshaw, a relative of theirs, who became a leader. The congregations so increased under the preaching of the Word, that a piece of ground was taken in Carra street, where a neat chapel was erected this year ; but for the sake of an ill-judged economy a large dwelling-house was built in front, leaving an inconvenient entrance to the chapel. This sacred edifice, however, proved to be the spiritual birth-place of hundreds of immortal souls. *

* *Irish Evangelist*, 1861, p. 198.

But to return to Wesley. Having preached at Roosky and Sidaire, he came to Derg-bridge, and found a large congregation waiting, who appeared one and all to be deeply serious. "Indeed," he says, "there is a wonderful reformation spreading throughout this whole country for several miles round. Outward wickedness is gone, and many, young and old, witness that the kingdom of God is within them." At Londonderry he found the members growing in grace, and increased in numbers from fifty-two to nearly seventy. He accepted an invitation to dinner from the Bishop, the Hon. F. A. Hervey,* with whose preaching and manner of reading the service, as well as Christian courtesy, he was most favourably impressed. At Castlecaulfield his sleeping accommodation was far from comfortable, as the rain came in freely through the thatch; but he says he "found no present inconvenience, and was not careful for the morrow."

At Dungannon he preached in the market-place to a numerous congregation. This year the preachers were first invited to the town by Mary Rice, who had been a member of the Society at Castlecaulfield, and thenceforward Dungannon was regularly visited by the itinerants, although no Society was formed until some years subsequently. At Killyman and Armagh Wesley had large audiences, and at Clonmain many were much affected. On Tuesday, June the 13th, Wesley was seized with illness, which well nigh proved fatal, yet for four days subsequently, though in a burning fever, he continued travelling and working as usual. That evening he preached "with ease to a multitude of people" at Cockhill; but next day at Grange it was with no little difficulty he got through the service. So finding himself worse he drank copiously of treacle and water, and applied treacle to his feet. This having proved effectual in relieving, though not in removing the disorder, he proceeded to Derryanvil, and preached in the open air. On Friday he again conducted a service on the parade at Lurgan; and on the following day a skilful physician having given him some medicine he set off for Tanderagee, where he was kindly received by the rector, the Rev. H. Leslie, LL.D., and thence

* He was a brother of Lady Mary Fitzgerald, and subsequently became Earl of Bristol.

to Derryaghy, where his overworked system sank, both mind and body having completely failed. Here he received from the family the kindest attention. Serious apprehensions were entertained throughout the kingdom, and fervent prayer was offered for his recovery. One day Mr. Payne with a few friends at Derryaghy, earnestly prayed that God would graciously prolong the valuable life of His servant, and, as in the case of Hezekiah, add to his days fifteen years. Mrs. Gayer suddenly rose from her knees, and exclaimed : " The prayer is granted ! " Soon after Mr. Wesley was restored to health, and, it is worthy of notice, survived from June, 1775, till March, 1791, a period of fifteen years and eight months.

The Rev. E. and Mrs. Smyth, who were in Lisburn at this time, and had been looking forward with no ordinary interest to meeting Mr. Wesley, were at length gratified. Mrs. Smyth wrote to her sister-in-law : " Mr. Smyth and I dined in company with Mr. Wesley at my uncle Gayer's yesterday. We spent a most happy day. The sweet old man seemed in good spirits. What a blessing is the communion of saints ! "

Twelve days after Wesley arrived at Derryaghy, to the astonishment of his friends, he set out for Dublin, where he soon resumed his usual labours, preaching twice each day ; and remained for more than three weeks. He makes no reference to holding a Conference this year in Ireland ; but Mr. Hern writes that on Friday, July the 14th, he rode to Dublin with Mr. Clendinnen, and reached there that evening, when they had a watch-night service. He also says : " We had a very smart Conference, but concluded in peace and love. " On Friday, the 21st, he left the metropolis, with Messrs. Slocomb, Snowden, and Halliday, and came in safety to Mountmellick.*

On the 23rd Wesley having again assisted in administering the Lord's supper at St. Patrick's, embarked for England, and thus ended this memorable visit to the Emerald Isle.

At the above Conference Messrs. John and Jeremiah Brettel and Hugh Brown were appointed to the Enniskillen circuit, where they found a poor but affectionate people. There were

* Unpublished Diary.

thirty-nine places to supply, and they had the satisfaction of seeing the work of God prosper. On one occasion Mr. Jeremiah Brettel preached the funeral sermon of a pious young woman, from the words, "Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" and soon after visited a new place in the neighbourhood, where he met an old man, who said to him, "I heard you preach at the funeral of my cousin; and I read the text over a hundred times afterwards. People greatly prejudiced me against your sort of people, but they told me lies of you: and now I am resolved, 'as for me and my house we will serve the Lord.'" The result of this decision was that his seven children soon after were all enabled to rejoice in the love of God. The old man also became so happy and active in the Divine service, as almost to think himself young again.

A zealous local preacher on this circuit being deeply impressed that he ought to visit Fintona, which was then noted for its wickedness, rode there, and, calling at a house, told the family he would stay and preach if they would call in some of their neighbours. They received him hospitably, and invited all the people round. At the close of the service he announced that he would preach again on the next evening, in another house, if anyone desired it. Thus he was invited by several families, remained some days, and the Lord gave His blessing. Many were awakened to a sense of their state, and led earnestly to seek the kingdom of God. Some of the members of an adjoining Society then visited the town, and arranged for a watch-night service, which excited great interest. A violent woman, who lived a few yards from the place of meeting, protested against anyone belonging to her going thither. At length she yielded to the earnest entreaties of her daughter, who desired to attend, but prayed that she might never see her way back again. During the service an uncommon power descended on the people, many were deeply affected, and led to cry aloud for mercy; and not a few found the blessing they sought. The woman mentioned above heard the noise, and went to the door, but soon returned to her own house, and there cried earnestly for mercy. Some persons were sent for to pray with her, and the Lord heard and delivered her from all her fears. Meantime, her daughter had also obtained

the pardoning love of God, and they rejoiced together. The Rev. Philip Skelton was then rector of the parish, and, desiring to see one of the preachers, Mr. Jeremiah Brettel called, whom he received kindly, and inquired particularly of him concerning his reasons for preaching, his doctrinal views, and his religious experience ; and they parted in good terms.

There were four preachers appointed to the Athlone circuit, which then included Westmeath, King's County, Queen's County, Tipperary, Meath, Galway, Mayo, and Longford.

Amongst those on the Newry circuit who at this period joined the Society and were converted to God, were two young men, John and William Hamilton, who resided at Mullaghglass, and subsequently became laborious and successful preachers. William especially was remarkably quaint, terse and homely in his style, and seldom failed to arrest the attention of his hearers and leave a lasting impression on their minds and hearts.

During this year John Price, who was stationed on the Londonderry circuit, preached at Coleraine in the street. Mr. Stephen Douthett was one of his hearers, and was so deeply impressed with what he heard that at the close of the service, when the preacher expressed his intention to visit the town again if anyone was willing to entertain him, he gladly embraced the opportunity, and made the messenger of the Lord welcome to his house. Thus Methodism for the first time obtained a footing in this town. It is a noteworthy circumstance that about the same time that Mr. Price was thus led to visit Coleraine, the Methodists of Lisburn arranged with one of their preachers to make a similar effort in that town, and united in special prayer that the Divine blessing would rest on his labours.

Chapter XXVII.

1776.

Soon after the conversion of Mrs. Edward Smyth her husband was likewise brought to a saving knowledge of the truth, and began to evince fervent zeal, not confining his labours to the church, but holding services in private houses, both in his own parish and in the neighbouring one of Dunsfort. These meetings were greatly owned of the Lord in the salvation of many, most of whom were at once enrolled in classes as members of the Methodist Society. Mrs. Smyth wrote in January, 1776: "I believe there has seldom been a greater revival of religion than in Dunsfort parish. The Lord hath confirmed it by signs and wonders. He seems truly to be pouring out His Spirit upon all flesh. Persons come five miles, and return home in the midst of the snow, to hear the word preached. Many young strong men have roared out through the anguish of their spirit. Some people were seized with fainting, trembling, contraction of their limbs, and violent crying. Mr. Smyth exhorted in a barn in that parish on Tuesday last, and it was thought he had six hundred hearers. Wonders are to be seen almost every time of our meeting." *

Margaret Davidson having met with the Rev. Edward Smyth and his excellent partner at Derryaghy, was invited to spend some time at their house. She had not been there very long when Mr. Smyth took her with him to a meeting at Dunsfort, and there insisted on her declaring to the people what the Lord had done for her soul. Such was the impression made by her address, that Mr. Smyth considered it advisable to leave her to work amongst the people. Meetings were arranged for each evening; large numbers flocked to hear the poor blind woman; some of these were brought into great distress about their souls, and persevered in prayer until they

* The Religion of the Heart Delineated, pp. 76, 77.

found rest in Jesus. The services were continued with signal success until, within a month, she could number one hundred who had been brought out of darkness into marvellous light.

Although there was much opposition to this work, a wonderful moral and religious change took place throughout the neighbourhood, which was most apparent. Amongst the many then brought into connection with Methodism, whose names were household words for more than half a century in that district of country, were David Thompson, of Ballyculter, a man of much piety, integrity and zeal, who was appointed to take charge of the first class formed, and was most acceptable as a leader and local preacher; Bernard Clinton, of Sheepland, who had been a zealous Roman Catholic; Thomas and Barbara Teer, of Killough, where a society of eleven members was formed; John and Jane Coates, of Slieveroe; Mr. and Mrs. Coulter, of Kilclief; and a host of others of like spirit.

The second Sunday school in Ireland of which there is any record, was one of the fruits of this gracious revival. It was opened by the Rev. Dr. Kennedy, incumbent of the parish of Bright. He was painfully impressed with the total disregard of the Lord's day amongst the young people in some villages through which he had to pass, and assisted by Thomas Teer, got the boys and girls together on Sundays to practise psalmody. This made a little stir. Soon to singing was added exercise in reading the Psalms and lessons for the day, which being rumoured abroad, excited great attention, and the numbers that attended increased considerably. Those who came were desired to bring what bibles and testaments they could in order to being better instructed and examined in what they read, and children of other denominations were invited to share the advantages of the meeting. Thus in the year 1778 the gathering, which had begun as a singing class, had matured into a school, held regularly every Sunday for an hour and a half before the morning service. The good work went on and prospered until the latter part of 1785, when Dr. Kennedy having heard of the establishment of Sunday schools in England, thought that his plan should be more comprehensive and systematic, according to the English method. During the winter information was circulated on the general subject, and funds

obtained from persons interested in the project. The necessary preliminaries having been arranged, the Bright Sunday school was re-opened on the first Sunday in May, 1786, well organized, with an efficient staff of teachers, including the devoted Thomas Teer.

Under a sense of duty Mr. Smyth wrote a letter of admonition to the great man of the parish, who was living in open sin. This, instead of leading him to repentance, excited his hostility, so that he deprived the writer of his house, and ordered his tenants not to receive him. Thus the faithful minister and his family were compelled to seek shelter in a little thatched cabin, with only two rooms and no attendance; but this reverse of fortune did not give Mrs. Smyth an uneasy thought. She could write, "Glory be to God for such a shelter! It is more than the King of kings was always assured of." Animated by this spirit, she entered heartily into the duties of her new position, rising early and late, taking little rest, and denying herself all but the mere necessities of life.

The fearless testimony and faithful preaching of Mr. Smyth, accompanied by the saintly life of his devoted wife, made a deep and gracious impression on the mind of the Hon. Miss Sophia Ward, daughter of Lord Bangor, showing her the transitory and unsatisfactory nature of worldly pleasure, and leading her to see the necessity of a life devoted to God in order to happiness. So that during the dispute between Mr. Smyth and her father, not only were her sympathies with the faithful minister, and not the faithless parent, but she was enabled by Divine grace to lay hold for refuge on the hope set before her in the Gospel. She also formed a high estimate of Irish Methodism, which she retained during her subsequent protracted life, and generally manifested in the final disposal of her property.

At this period the Society in Dublin sustained a severe loss in the death of Mr. Garrett, one of its oldest and most consistent leaders, who for sixteen years had been an eminently holy and useful man, and his end was glorious. The Lord poured into his soul such a full tide of blessing as enabled him to rejoice in the prospect of the Paradise of God, and made even

his face to shine. When his voice was almost lost in death, he exclaimed, "Glory, glory be to God! the Lord, the Saviour! O, He has conquered for me! He has conquered in me sin, death and hell. I come! I come. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!"

In Cork a soldier named Whitmore, a notorious blasphemer, who had murdered one of his comrades and was sentenced to death, was visited by Mr. John Watson, the Assistant on the circuit. Through the Divine blessing on the faithful and earnest efforts of this servant of God, the wretched criminal was led to see his awful guilt, and the great love of God in Christ to him, so that he went cheerfully to the place of execution, rejoiced in the prospect of soon being with his Saviour, and gave out and sang a hymn immediately before his spirit was hurried into the eternal world.*

The British Conference met this year on August the 6th, when the increase in membership reported from Ireland was five hundred and sixty-one; but two serious complaints were made with regard to this country. Of the upwards of £600 raised by the Yearly Collection, only thirty-five shillings had been contributed in the Emerald Isle, and that in one town only—Bandon. The brethren in the rest of the country affirmed that they were responsible only for the contingent and travelling expenses of their own preachers. But the Conference thought differently; and they were required to pay, in addition, the expenses of all English preachers going to and from Ireland, and of any sickness or unavoidable distress that might befall them or their wives in this country. It was also further reported that in Ireland, most likely in Dublin, part of the leaders met together on Sunday evenings, without any connection with or dependence on the Assistant, and therefore it was formally declared: "We have no such custom in the three kingdoms. It is overturning our discipline from the foundations. Either let them act under the direction of the Assistant, or let them meet no more. It is true they can contribute money to the poor; but we dare not sell our discipline for money."†

* Unpublished MS.

† Minutes, I., pp. 124-25.

Jeremiah Brettel, who, with his brother and Robert Davis, was appointed to the Armagh circuit, says they had to preach at thirty-four different places, which included some considerable towns, such as Newry, Lurgan, Tanderagee and Charlemont. In this last place especially they had a good Society, and some very pious people.

Messrs. Pritchard, Hern, Mill and R. Armstrong were appointed to the Londonderry circuit. Mr. Pritchard says the circuit was large and laborious to travel, having to go to Coleraine on the one hand, and to the dreary county of Donegal on the other, and round by Lough Derg to Lisleen. Mr. Hern gives fuller details. The appointments included Londonderry, Kilrea, Coleraine, and Newtownlimavady, in Derry; Drumclaph, Lislap, Magheracolton, Whiskey hill, Kirlish Lodge, Creevy, Killeter, Lisleen, and Killeen, in Tyrone; and Castlefin, in Donegal. The September quarterly meeting was at Lisleen; having held which, Messrs. Pritchard and Hern, accompanied by Mr. A. Boyle, went to Charlemont, to attend the quarterly meeting there. The Rev. E. Smyth preached in the street at eleven o'clock, afterwards held the love-feast, and preached again in the evening. God was present. Then Mr. Hern preached "with great freedom." The next day a similar series of services was held at Lisburn.

The itinerants and Mr. Boyle then proceeded to the north, preaching at Ballymena and Ballymoney *en route* to Coleraine, where on the following Sunday, October the 6th, Mr. Hern preached. He could not sing; but this lack was supplied by the zeal and devotion of a young woman, afterwards Mrs. M'Kenny, and several other members of the Society at Ballymena, who walked the entire distance, nearly thirty miles, that they might thus assist at the service. Surrounded by this choir Mr. Hern took his stand in the Diamond when the several congregations were retiring from their respective places of worship: and soon had an attentive audience, "almost the whole town attended." Charles and John Galt, who had been at the Presbyterian meeting-house; Robert and Thomas Rice, who were returning from the parish church, and Thomas Bennett, were among the hearers, and afterwards attended the Methodist services, more or less

frequently. The preachers and their kind friend remained in the town for the two following days, preaching each evening in the market-house "to a great multitude." With the financial assistance of Mr. Boyle, the wing of an old barrack which had been long unused and was falling into decay, was secured as a place of worship. By throwing several rooms into one, an apartment was fitted up for the services, capable of containing from three to four hundred persons. Another portion was prepared for the preachers to lodge in during their periodic visits, while they boarded with the people, being received with much attention and respect. A class was formed of which Robert Douthett was appointed the leader; and before the close of the year there were almost sixty members of Society, chiefly persons in very humble circumstances, called "the poor folk at the barrack." The moral improvement in the conduct of these, however, was so marked, that the Society gained the good will and confidence of those of more influence.

In Kilrea the Rev. J. Haughton, who had been in the itinerancy, and recently obtained this parish, received the preachers with much cordiality; but did not long survive his appointment, as in about two years after he was taken to the home above.

Early in September Samuel Bradburn, "the Methodist Demosthenes," sailed for Ireland, having been appointed to Limerick, and a few days after his arrival on the circuit spent his last shilling. He entered upon his work with fear and trembling, but God gave him great favour in the eyes of the people, so that he was soon agreeably settled, and was cheered by the attendance of "amazing congregations." During the following month he preached fifty-seven times, and on the 29th conducted a watch-night service, and preached, prayed, and sang four hours without intermission. In the midst of this hard toil, he says, he was very happy; but it proved too much for him, and his health gave way.*

In the meantime, through the influence of Lord Bangor, a petition was sent to Dr. Trail, Bishop of the diocese, charging the Rev. E. Smyth with erroneous teaching and irregularity in

* Life of Bradburn, pp. 57, 58.

conducting public worship. He was therefore cited to appear before his lordship at Knockbreda on October the 21st. The Rev. Wm. Bristow, the vicar-general, a clergyman of liberal Christian principles, who had been appointed vicar of Belfast in 1772, was summoned to appear for the prosecution; and when called on said he had heard Mr. Smyth conduct public worship, and pray and preach extempore, and that his prayers and sermons were highly instructive and scriptural, in accordance with the Articles, Homilies and Liturgies of the Church of England, and well fitted to promote the spiritual improvement of the people.* Mr. Smyth also had an opportunity, which he improved, of giving a public testimony to the truth, proving that the doctrines he preached were in harmony with the Word of God, as well as the teaching of the Church. Although he completely refuted every accusation, he was deprived of his cure, through an illegal stretch of power. This circumstance, though most trying, was over-ruled for good, as Mr. Smyth resolved to accept no preferment in the Church, and give himself wholly to the work of God in connection with Methodism. Although living on a very small annuity, he never lacked either food or raiment; his sphere of usefulness was greatly enlarged, and many souls were converted through his instrumentality.

Meanwhile the good work prospered in Dunsfort and Ballyculter. Mrs. Smyth writes: "I can give you but a small notion how the Word of the Lord runs and is glorified. All around, young and old, flock to the standard of Jesus, as the doves to their windows. I think the class in this town (Strangford) consists of thirty-six, almost all alive to God; and particularly some girls, who seem resolved to take the kingdom of heaven by violence."

The Rev. J. Abraham visited Mr. Smyth and was greatly quickened. Mrs. Smyth describes him as a most amiable young man, who, although his friends were greatly opposed to his identifying himself with Methodism, seemed resolved to follow Christ fully, be the consequences what they may.

In the neighbourhood of Cavan the word was received by

* *Irish Evangelist*, 1868, p. 26.

Mr. Robert Creighton, of Kilmore. He writes as follows—
“My two sisters and I some time ago joined Mr. Wesley’s Society, and have ever since entertained the preachers. My brother, the Rev. J. Creighton, at first opposed us much, on account of our religious principles; but he is now, through grace, himself convinced of the truth.”

In Dublin the spirit of contention appears to have arisen again. Mr. M’Nab who had been the Assistant of the circuit during the two previous years, says he had reason to believe that he was made a blessing to many souls, and that he was persuaded he would have been more abundantly so, had it not been for some discontented men in the Society, who strove to do him all the hurt they could: and they succeeded in restraining his usefulness, as they had done that of many of his brethren before him.*

In November Mr. Hopper paid a short visit of two weeks to the city, probably to try and allay this ferment. He only says, however, that he preached every evening to large audiences, and God blessed His word and gave him success. He visited a few backsliders also, who were glad to see the face of an old friend.

Mr. Slocomb, who had been appointed to the Clones circuit, and is described by Wesley as “an old labourer, worn out in the service,” came to the house of Mr. Maguire at Mullalougher, ill of fever, the week before Christmas. Although he was tended with unremitting care and affection, on the last day of the year he sank under the virulence of the disease, and his spirit entered triumphantly into his Master’s joy. When Mr. and Mrs. Maguire returned from the interment of this faithful old soldier of the cross, they found that two of their children had taken the infection, and soon after Mr. Maguire and two others of the family caught the disease; but the Lord supported and healed them. Mr. Maguire then resolved to remove to Dublin, which he did as soon as practicable: and in the metropolis he and his family identified themselves heartily with Methodism.

* *Arminian Magazine*, 1779, p. 248.

Chapter XXVIII.

1777.

EARLY in 1777 Mr. Bradburn was removed to Dublin, where the people in general manifested great love to him, and having less to do than in Limerick, his health gradually improved. In preaching he felt "a heavenly sweetness," and souls were converted under the word.

The Rev. E. Smyth visited the metropolis at the same time, and preached frequently in the Methodist chapel. That an Episcopal clergyman, the nephew of an archbishop, and one whose family was so highly respectable, should pursue such a course excited much interest and curiosity, and multitudes flocked to hear.

Amongst those thus attracted by the fame of the preacher, was a young man named Henry Moore, who was under great concern for his soul. He was much impressed with what he saw and heard; but the sermon did not meet his case. However he determined to be a regular hearer, and had no doubt that the word preached would prove to him the savour of life. So he returned in a day or two with great expectations; but was much disappointed when he found the pulpit occupied by a layman in plain clothes, Mr. Bradburn: and was about promptly to leave the chapel when better thoughts prevailed, and he resumed his seat. The word came with power to his heart, and the service proved to be the turning point in the history of this young man, who in time became one of the foremost Methodist preachers of his day.

Soon he obtained peace and joy in believing, became a member of the Society, and thus got acquainted with Edward Gibson, Matthias Joyce, Bennett Dugdale, and others of the devoted band of godly young men then identified with Methodism in the metropolis. They regularly visited the sick and those in prison, and thus witnessed appalling scenes of disease and every species of misery; but the Lord greatly blessed their labours.

Amongst those whom they were the means of leading to the Saviour were some of the lowest and worst of criminals. One

of these was a Romanist, under sentence of death, named Huggins, of most forbidding and repulsive appearance, who seemed at first quite callous and utterly insensible to his awful position. At length he was roused to a sense of his terrible state, became intensely anxious, and then God spoke peace to his soul. Even the external transformation was marvellous, his face shone with happiness, and his whole frame partook of the joy of his spirit. The change had a most salutary effect on his fellow culprits, also under sentence of death, one of whom prayed earnestly when proceeding to the place of execution : " O Lord, give me an item of it "—that is of the pardon which he knew his companion possessed. At the gallows Huggins broke out in prayer and praise, and exhortation. " Hold your tongue, I say," vociferated a priest. " Sir," said Huggins, " the Lord encourages me, and I cannot be silent," and in this happy frame he was soon translated to the Paradise of God.

The Society in Dublin became increasingly lively and zealous, and some of the people desired to enlarge the work. A prayer meeting was therefore begun at Dolphin's barn, where the preaching room secured by Charles Wesley had been given up, after the erection of the chapel in Whitefriar street. The people flocked to it, and soon the place became too strait for them. They then took an unoccupied weaver's shop, and had it suitably fitted up. Here Henry Moore preached his first sermon. When the preacher visited the place, he found twenty-six persons had been brought into the Society, all of whom were either under conviction of sin, or happy in the knowledge of God.*

Meanwhile, the Rev. E. Smyth having no further inducement to remain in Ballyculter, removed with his family to Downpatrick. Here he began at once to hold services in the open air ; his extraordinary zeal, eventful history, superior talents, and gentlemanly appearance, all contributed to give success to his meetings. He did not, however, confine his labours to the town ; but travelled through the country, preaching, holding love-feasts, and administering the Sacraments. Thus numerous Societies were formed. Mrs. Smyth writes

* Life of the Rev. H. Moore, pp. 16-42.

concerning him—"The success that attends his words is really amazing; there is scarce any place that he has preached that he has not had seals to his ministry, and these not a few. Many witness at the love-feasts, that he is their father in Christ."

The death of the junior preacher on the Lisburn circuit, John Harrison, a young man of great piety and promise, added considerably to the labours of Mr. Smyth. Hence we find Mr. Wesley writing to Mr. Benson as follows—"If there is a preacher to spare, let him step over as soon as possible from Portpatrick, and supply the place of that good young man, John Harrison, in the Lisburn circuit. Mr. Smyth calls aloud for help. He is zealous and active, but is quite overborne." *

The British Conference met on August the 5th, when the total membership in Ireland reported was five thousand two hundred and eleven, being an increase of four hundred and thirteen on the previous year.

Messrs. R. Watkinson and J. Prickard† were appointed to the Londonderry circuit, a portion of which evidently having been cut off to form a new circuit, of which Ballyshannon was the head. Through the instrumentality of these excellent brethren the good work greatly prospered, especially at Coleraine, the rector of the parish, the Rev. Mr. Boyd, being favourable to the cause, and kind and attentive to the preachers.

Messrs. Jer. and John Brettel, and J. Hern, were stationed in Lisburn. Mr. Jer. Brettel says, they had thirty-three places to preach at, and many of them had been but recently visited by the preachers. In Lisburn they had a lively Society, some of whom were persons of deep piety. Through the circuit great numbers attended the services, and much labour and instruction were necessary, with God's blessing, to improve the minds of the people and direct them in the right way.

The Limerick circuit requiring an additional preacher, Mr. Myles was appointed to labour there. He bore his own expenses during the year, and the Lord blessed his labours and

* Wesley's Works, xii, pp. 426-27.

† Mistaken for Mr. Pritchard in the Minutes of the Irish Conference.

those of the Assistant, Mr. John Watson, so that upwards of one hundred members were added to the Society.*

It was in Dublin, however, that the events of most stirring interest took place. The contention that had long existed in the Society, and had been lulled into a calm, was now increasing and about to burst in a storm. On the day on which Mr. Hampson, senior, the Assistant of the circuit, landed at Dublin from the British Conference, a charge of preaching false doctrine was preferred against his colleague, Mr. Bradburn, by Mr. Solomon Walker, a gentleman of considerable influence and wealth in connection with the Society. The particulars of the charge are not now available; but their nature may be inferred from what follows. Mr. Hampson in a pamphlet entitled, "The Case Stated," after severely censuring the time at which this charge was made, and the manner in which it was supported by others than Mr. Walker; and after eloquently asserting his colleague's orthodoxy, good temper and usefulness, affirms that Mr. Bradburn's arguments against Calvinism had been so powerful, that some lukewarm people had been made uneasy under them, and could not sleep quite so soundly as they used to do, for they were convinced that if what he said was true, they had been prophesying smooth things, and crying peace, peace, when God had not spoken peace.

The matter was evidently reported to Mr. Wesley, who sent the following reply to Mr. Alexander Clark, dated September the 9th—"It is certain our preachers have a right to preach our doctrines, as my lady's have to preach theirs. None can blame them for this. But I blame all, even, that speak the truth otherwise than in love. Keeness of spirit and tartness of language are never to be commended. It is only in meekness that men are to instruct them that oppose themselves. But we are not allowed, on any account whatever, to return evil for evil, or railing for railing."†

Meanwhile the dispute had assumed another and more serious form, than that of simply accusing a Methodist preacher of being rather emphatic in his Arminianism. It became a question of moral character and conduct. Mr. Hampson called

* *Arminian Magazine*, 1797, p. 212. † *The Western Pioneers*, pp. 45, 46.

a meeting of the trustees of the Widows' Alms House, to elect a successor to Mr. Gaskell, deceased. The opportunity was seized by Messrs. Geoghegan and Hall, of accusing the treasurer, Mr. Martin, of cheating the charity, which, it was said, would be substantiated by a reference to the books. Mr. Martin was from home on account of his health at the time, and on his return the matter was at once investigated by Messrs. Walker, Deaves and Keene; and it was found that instead of defrauding the poor widows, for several years the treasurer had advanced money out of his own pocket towards the institution, which then owed him a considerable sum, and that the entries in the book on which the charges were based, had been surreptitiously made there by one of the accusers.

Here then was an undoubted case for discipline; but Mr. Hampson evidently considered that guilt was not confined to one person, and that the gross wrong done was only one indication out of many, of a bad spirit, which others also had displayed: and therefore he acted with vigour, if not with sternness, by expelling four leaders for unchristian conduct. These were the Messrs. Clark, and probably Messrs. Geoghegan and Hall. Two of these, however, persisted in meeting their classes, and they were therefore read out publicly on a Sunday evening. Doubtless there was strong sympathy among the officers and members of the Society with those on whom discipline had been exercised, especially the Messrs. Clark, which was expressed in such a way that between expulsions and resignations, thirty-four members were lost to the Society, including Messrs. Walker and R. Hunt.

Numerous letters having been sent to Mr. Wesley, informing him of the state of affairs, and finding that all he could write was not sufficient to calm the troubled waters, he resolved to come himself and try what could be done. Accordingly he made a hurried visit to the city, arriving on Saturday, October the 4th, when Mr. M'Kenny met him, and brought him to his house.

The news of Wesley's arrival soon spread, the friends flocked from all quarters, and seemed equally surprised and pleased to see him. He found the congregations exceedingly large and the total membership unchanged, notwithstanding

the losses sustained. When he met the excluded members and heard them at length, they pleaded their case with earnestness and calmness, but refused to be pacified. They were civil, even affectionate to him, but could never forgive the preachers who had expelled them, so that he could not desire them to return into the Society. They remained however friends at a distance, meeting in class by themselves, but regularly attending the preaching services in Whitefriar street chapel.

During this visit of Mr. Wesley to the metropolis, there was another visiter in the city, who subsequently took a very prominent position in connection with Irish Methodism. The Rev. Adam Averell, then a young man of twenty-one, who had been ordained deacon only two or three months, happened to call at the house of Mr. Persse, a barrister, found the family at dinner, and being asked to join them, consented. Immediately after he had taken his seat, Mr. Persse, addressing the gentleman who sat next him, said—"Well, Mr. Wesley, we interrupted you in the anecdote you were telling." The name of Wesley startled the young clergyman; he had often heard before of the founder of the Methodists, and now for the first time met him; and was not a little surprised to be informed by his host, that he considered Mr. Wesley "one of the greatest and best men of the age." In the evening Mr. Averell went with Mr. Persse to Whitefriar street chapel, sat in the pulpit, and heard Wesley preach.*

On Sunday, October the 12th, the venerated evangelist took a solemn and affectionate leave of the members of Society, "more in number," and he was persuaded "more established in grace than they had been for twenty years."

But to return to Ulster. In Newtownbutler, although the Methodists were not exposed to brutal violence, yet for several years, after the first visits of the preachers, the Society made but little progress. A few very poor people were united in class and were favoured with an occasional sermon as the preachers passed through the town, but none of the Methodists were in circumstances to entertain the servants of God. At length, during this year, a brighter day dawned on the infant

* Memoir of the Rev. A. Averell, pp. 15, 16.

Society. John Clarke, second son of James Clarke, of Cortrasna, having married his cousin Anne, a truly pious young woman, rented a house in Newtownbutler, and opened a shop. On the following Sunday morning, Mr. Horner, the Assistant of the Clones circuit, rode into the town, and preached in the house of a wheelwright named Trotten, when Mr. Clarke, seeing that the preacher was about to leave without partaking of any refreshments, invited him to his house, and desired that on his return he would come on the Saturday night, stop with him, and preach. From that time the itinerants regularly visited the town once a fortnight, and preached on Saturday evenings and Sunday mornings, which proved a source of strength and blessing not only to the Society in the town, but also to several small societies in the surrounding country, the members of which came to the Sabbath services. The meetings continued to be held in John Clarke's house for several years, and when the increase of his business rendered it necessary to enlarge his premises, he left the second floor in one room, so as to afford increased accommodation for public worship.*

In Downpatrick the Rev. E. Smyth having secured a suitable site for a preaching-house, collected the necessary funds, and set to work to have it built. In this erection he assisted in the manual labour; and had the satisfaction of conducting the opening service on the morning of Wednesday, November the 26th. In the evening Mr. Hern "preached with freedom from Revelation iii. 20." In this work Mr. Smyth was greatly assisted by Mr. Thomas Tate, a gentleman of influence in the town, who was not a Methodist, but several members of his family were, including his son-in-law, Mr. George Moore, who was for many years the chief support of the cause in Downpatrick. When the preaching-house was completed, Mr. Smyth and his family took up their abode in a small room adjoining, built for the accommodation of the preachers. Yet even in this obscure home, deprived of all the luxuries of life and many of its comforts, his delicately-reared young wife, although very weak in body, realized a deep and lasting happiness which raised her above every discomfort.

* *Irish Evangelist*, 1861, p. 14.

Chapter XXX.

1778.

At the beginning of 1778, Mr. Hugh Moore visited Drum-bullion in the parish of Killashandra, where the Lord greatly blessed his labours; a prosperous society was formed, and a chapel soon erected. This building had a noteworthy history of its own. When the lease expired in 1798, the noble landlord took possession of the edifice and turned it into a school-house. The teacher was a Roman Catholic, and soon after his appointment, having declined to fulfil a matrimonial engagement with a young woman of his own communion, she in a spirit of retaliation set fire to the building, and it was burned to the ground. Little thus was gained by depriving the Methodists of their place of worship.*

On the Lisburn circuit the preachers persevered in their arduous and self-denying work. Frequently during the winter for want of room they had to preach out-of-doors, sometimes standing in the snow. Such excessive labours brought on an attack of fever, which nearly closed the career of Mr. Jeremiah Brettel. He had no pain, but slept perpetually. When roused from his sleep, and warned of his danger, he replied—"I shall live to go to England with Mr. Wesley," and immediately fell asleep again. Three days subsequently he was once more roused, and informed that the friends thought his recovery hopeless; he answered—"All things are possible to him that believeth," and slept again. He continued in this state for several weeks, and then slowly began to recover. During his illness two deaths from the same complaint took place in the household of Mrs. Bennett, Broom-hedge, by whom he was so kindly nursed—her eldest son and a servant maid—and both died happy in the Lord. †

On April 2nd Mr. Welsey arrived in Dublin, where he had the satisfaction to find that notwithstanding the recent separation, the members of the Society, while numerically

* *Irish Evangelist*, 1861, p. 194.

† *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1830, p. 656.

undiminished, were more alive to God, and more united than they had been for some years.

Having spent five days in the metropolis, he set out for the country. At Tyrrell's Pass he preached to numerous congregations, and the power of the Lord was present to heal. At Mullingar the audience was much more serious than he had seen there before; at Longford the hearers were still more serious and not less numerous; and at Athlone he had a comfortable time, all being peace and harmony, and God spoke by His word both to wound and to heal. Some of the large congregation at Ballinasloe seemed much affected, as did many at Aghrim; and at Eyrecourt, the minister not only lent his church to the devoted evangelist, but also invited him to his house. At Birr the hearers were deeply attentive; many old friends assembled at Coolalough; and at Tullamore the commanding officer ordered all the soldiers to be present at the service, and attended himself with the rest of the officers.

At Portarlington Wesley had a very respectable yet attentive audience. At Mountmellick he preached in the church to a congregation much larger than when he was there before, and considerably more attentive. At Kilkenny, in consequence of the parliamentary election, and also the perpetual quarrels between the chief members of the Society, the congregation was small and dead. At Clonmel the preaching room being inadequate, and the weather unfavourable, the service was held in the largest room in the town. At Bandon, from the size and seriousness of the congregation he thought the work of God was much increased; but upon inquiry found the contrary; nearly one third of those were wanting, whom he had left in the Society three years previously, but those who remained seemed much in earnest. At Cork he found no increase in the membership, notwithstanding the glowing accounts he had received, yet many of the members were much alive to God. Here two companies of volunteers attended an evening service in the chapel, the gentlemen of the Aghrim Society dressed in scarlet filled the side galleries, while the Independent Company, dressed in blue, occupied the front gallery and part of the body of the house, and all seemed to hear as for life.

At Kilfinnane, in the neighbourhood of which there was a considerable revival of the work of God, Wesley preached in a large vacant house secured for the purpose. At Limerick he found the congregations good and well sustained, and the Society appeared more alive to God and more loving than he had known them to be for many years. While in the city he wrote—"A Compassionate Address to the Inhabitants of Ireland," in which he refers to the general panic which prevailed concerning the desperate state of the nation. The fear of invasion from every side was making the people tremble. He laughs to scorn the report that General Washington had an army of 65,000 men; and says that "the French will as soon swallow up the sea" as swallow up old England; that the Spanish have not forgotten Havannah; that the Portuguese were "not such arrant fools" as to join in a confederacy with England's enemies; and that as to all *intestine vipers*, "there was no more need of being afraid of ten thousand White Boys than of ten thousand crows." "Blessed be God," he says, "there are still within the kingdom some thousands of regular troops, of horse as well as foot, who are ready to march wherever they shall be wanted; over and above the independent companies at Birr, at Mountmellick, at Bandon, and at Cork."*

Wesley preached to the poor people at Ballingarrane, who attended in large numbers, although the notice was short; and also to "the loving, earnest, simple-hearted" folk of Newmarket, who two months previously had been bereaved of good Philip Guier, their faithful and devoted spiritual father. At Ballinrobe there was a "numerous congregation, but most of them dead as stones;" at Hollymount there were more than the house could contain; and at Castlebar there was a lively, earnest people, upon whom the Lord graciously poured out His Spirit.

From this town Wesley drove to Sligo, accompanied by Messrs. Bradford and Delap, and two of the local brethren: when such was the state of the road, that twice he had to be carried on the shoulders of some of the peasantry over bogs, while the chaise was either being borne by others, or with no little difficulty and damage dragged through the mud. Having

* Wesley's Works, XI., pp. 149-56.

arrived at his destination he was thankful to find tokens of a gracious revival. It appears that after the recent division in the town the Methodists wisely abstained from entering into controversy with their former brethren, and gave themselves heartily to evangelistic work, labouring amongst both Protestants and Roman Catholics: in which efforts Charles Graham took a leading part. This brought on them the ire of the priests, who denounced them from the altars. Other means also were used by the opponents of the truth to accomplish their evil purpose. Thus as Graham went one Sabbath morning to meet a class, some distance from the town, a stalwart Romanist, instigated by altar denunciations, struck him on the side of the head: the servant of God, acting literally on the injunction of his Master, "turned to him the other also," and receiving a second blow, said—"It will be a mercy if you are able to lift that arm this day week." To the consternation of all who knew it the man was buried on that day week.* From that time forward preachers and leaders passed to their appointments unmolested. During this revival special prominence was given to the blessing of purity of heart. The whole circuit partook of the gracious influence, and numbers were led to seek and obtain the pearl of perfect love. Mr. Wesley found the congregations considerably increased, and the Society nearly doubled. For four years this good work continued to make steady progress, and the membership increased from four hundred and two this year to one thousand and ninety-eight in 1782, when a second division of the circuit took place.

At Swanlinbar Wesley preached in a large apartment designed for an assembly room, where rich and poor listened with great attention. At Belturbet he occupied the armoury, and the audience was large and serious. At Cavan, in the courthouse, the congregation was still larger; and at Cootehill, where the use of the Presbyterian meeting-house had been procured, he had an extraordinary audience consisting of all creeds and parties.

At Clones he preached in the fort to very large and increasing congregations: and observes—"There is something

* The Apostle of Kerry, p. 22.

very peculiar in this people; they are more plain, open and earnest than most I have seen in the kingdom. Indeed, some of our Irish Societies—those in Athlone, Limerick, Castlebar, and Clones—have much of the spirit of our old Yorkshire Societies.” Early morning meetings were regularly and numerous attended in this town; there was much life in the Society, and the zeal and consistency of the members had a good influence on the community at large. This was particularly manifest in the case of horse-racing. There had been annual races in the neighbourhood, to which great crowds resorted, when a silver plate or cup purchased by public subscription was the chief object of competition. But such was the moral influence resulting from the conversion of so many respectable inhabitants, that sufficient subscriptions could not be raised, and the races ceased. Of the leading members, one was a cousin of the Rev. William Thompson, Mr. Andrew Thompson, a faithful and laborious leader, who went regularly six miles on the Sabbath morning to meet a class; another was Mr. Bernard Connolly, who when passing the chapel one evening was induced to enter, and the result was his conversion to God, so that he became very useful; and a third was Mr. John Armstrong, who had under his care a class for the religious instruction of youths, in which he was much acknowledged of God.*

But to return to Wesley. At Aghalun, Sidaire and Magheracolton there were large and attentive audiences. At Londonderry he found the Society a little smaller than it had been three years previously, and was surprised that more good had not been done, considering the size and seriousness of the congregations. At Kilrea he was the guest of Mr. Haughton, but the church being a mere heap of ruins, he preached in the new meeting-house to a very large auditory, some of whom seemed not a little affected, and all were seriously attentive.

At Coleraine the spacious preaching room could not contain a third of the congregation; but, standing at the door, he had them all before him in the barrack square. On the following day, having visited the Giant's Causeway in the morning, he

* *Irish Evangelist*, 1861, p. 193.

witnessed a cheering and touching scene in the evening. A few days previously a young lady had joined the Society without the knowledge of her relatives : and having been informed that her sister was speaking to Mr. Wesley with the same object, she entered the room, ran and fell upon her neck, wept with holy joy, and then sank on her knees to praise God. Her sister could hardly bear it—she was in tears, and so were all present. These two young ladies were the Misses Young, and their becoming Methodists added much to the influence and success of the Society. One of them was afterwards united in marriage to Mr. Henry Moore, and the other to Mr. T. Rutherford. On Sunday Wesley having breakfasted with the Rev. Mr. Boyd, of whom he speaks in strong terms of commendation, read prayers in the church, and administered the Lord's supper to an unprecedented number of communicants. The Right Hon. Richard Jackson, M.P., and his excellent lady, who were present, seemed to rejoice in showing him every mark of respect. In the evening the venerated evangelist preached to a wonderful congregation in the barrack square, many of whom were present at the five o'clock service next morning.

Having visited Ballymoney and Ballymena he arrived at Carrickfergus, where he met Messrs. J. Hern and William Black, who accompanied him round the circuit. Here, as the town-hall could not contain the audience, he occupied the market-house : and the people appeared more serious, and the Society more earnest than for many years. At Belfast he preached beside the new parish church of St. Anne's in Donegall street, to far the largest congregation he had seen in Ireland ; but thought the spirit of the majority of his hearers was described in his text—"And Gallio cared for none of those things." This was the third time he applied this passage to the people of this town. While the venerable evangelist was thus proclaiming the message of mercy, a young soldier was engaged with a trooper in playing cards in an adjoining public house, and saw the crowds passing to the service, but would not leave his game. Having lost all his money, in hope of getting back some he staked a new pair of shoes, which he lost, and then went home vexed and mortified.

His name was Joseph Burgess, and he subsequently became a devoted and useful Methodist preacher.*

At Newtownards Wesley preached to five or six hundred people in the old church, and then proceeded to Kirkcubbin, where he was the guest of Joseph Napier, Esq., of St. Andrew's,† who fitted up a barn for the devoted evangelist to preach in, and also accompanied him in many of his ministrations.‡ He then went to Strangford and preached, standing on a rock which projected into a large cavity filled with people. He next visited Downpatrick, where he was the guest of Mr. Richardson, whose wife, mother and two daughters were all converted through Methodism. Close to the house of his host Wesley observed one of the most beautiful groves he had ever seen covering the side of a hill, and a circular space in the centre. He was most eager to preach in this delightful spot, and on the following day the desired opportunity was afforded. So taking his stand on a pedestal, from which had fallen a statue of St. Patrick, this modern apostle of Ireland proclaimed the Gospel to a vast multitude standing on the gradually rising ground before him, and listening with breathless attention to the message of salvation. The whole scene was one of intense interest and solemnity, and impressions for good were then made such as were never afterwards effaced. ||

Downpatrick was at this time part of the Lisburn circuit, and it was not uncommon for some of the Society to walk to that town, a distance of twenty miles, to a love-feast. "The word of the Lord was precious in those days," and the love and unity of the people resembled that of the members of the early Church, when they "were of one heart and of one soul." Amongst these early Methodists were Mrs. Tate, her son-in-law, Mr. George Moore, for many years circuit steward, Miss Tate, Dr. Speers, Mr. Sloane, and Miss Kearns—names that should not be forgotten.

At Derryaghy Wesley preached to a lively congregation under the shade of a venerable yew tree, supposed to have

* Memoirs of the Rev. J. Burgess, pp. 13, 14.

† Grandfather of the late Right Hon. Sir Joseph Napier, Bart., Lord Chancellor of Ireland.

‡ *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1864, p. 558. || Unpublished MS.

flourished in the reign of King James, if not of Queen Elizabeth. At Lisburn, to which the brethren had flocked from all directions, he preached three times, presided at the quarterly meeting, and conducted the love-feast, when many of the people declared with all simplicity and yet with great propriety what God had done for their souls. At Ballinderry large numbers assembled to hear, though at very short notice ; and there were four or five times as many at Lurgan in the evening, but " some of them wild as colts untamed." On the following morning he opened a small dwelling-house, which had been fitted up as a chapel, to the great joy of the little Society in the town. Mr. Miller, a local woollendraper, of whose ingenuity Wesley speaks at length, painted a representation of an angel pointing to Revelation xxii. 17, which was placed above the pulpit.*

At Derryanvil and Cockhill there were attentive congregations ; and at Charlemont, where Wesley was the guest of the commanding-officer, Captain Tottenham, all the soldiers were present, in addition to large numbers from the surrounding country. At Armagh on Sunday morning the congregation was large and serious. It is probable that it is to this service William Black refers as one at which he was present, and of which he says—Mr. Wesley preached from Luke xx, 36 : and when he came to speak on the second clause, " For they are equal to angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection," he repeated it several times, and his soul being so filled with rapture that he could not proceed, he burst into tears, saying, " Let us pray." An overwhelming influence fell upon the assembly. In the evening the audience was increased fourfold ; but " there were many who behaved as if they had been in a bear garden." At Tanderagee, where he was the guest of Dr. Leslie, he preached in the court-yard, under the shade of a tall spreading tree, in the midst of a numerous congregation, who were still as night. Next evening there was a large audience at Newry ; and then he returned to Dublin, where during the following week he visited as many as he could, and endeavoured

* *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1827, p. 801.

to confirm their love to each other. He says that he had not known the Society for many years to be so united as it was then.

On July the 7th the Conference began, at which about twenty preachers were present. The increase in the membership during the year amounted to one hundred and twenty-five. Wm. Gill, Andrew Blair and Wm. Myles were received on trial. The question of leaving the Established Church was debated; but "after a full discussion of the point," says Wesley, "we all remained firm in our judgment, that it is our duty not to leave the Church wherein God has blessed us, and does bless us still." This discussion was brought about by the Rev. E. Smyth, who was most eager for a separation, and laboured with all his might to accomplish his purpose, but failed. "Is it our duty," it was asked, "to separate from the Church, considering the wickedness both of the clergy and the people?" "We conceive not," was the answer—1. "Because both the priests and the people were full as wicked in the Jewish Church, and yet God never commanded the holy Israelites to separate from them. 2. Neither did our Lord command His disciples to separate from them: if He did not command just the contrary. 3. Hence it is clear *that* could not be the meaning of St. Paul's words, 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate.' " Wesley considered such questions then as only a diversion from the appropriate work of Methodism, and therefore reminded the Conference of its high calling by the additional question—"Have we a right view of our work?" It was answered: "Perhaps not. It is not to take care of this or that Society, or to preach so many times; but to save as many souls, and bring as many sinners to repentance as we can, and with all our power to build them up in that holiness, without which they cannot see the Lord."*

* The following is the list of stations, taken from a copy of the Minutes in the hands of the Rev. Dr. Osborn:—Dublin—R. Watkinson, W. Eells; Waterford—T. Halliday, R. Armstrong; Cork—J. Hampson, sen., S. Bradburn; Limerick—A. Dalap, J. Bredin; Castlebar—N. Price, W. Myles; Athlone—T. Payne, R. Boardman; Sligo—R. Lindsay, H. Moore; Clones—W. Boothby, J. Hern; Enniskillen—J. Price, G. Brown; Lisleen—J. Mayly, J. Howe, W. M'Cornock; Armagh—P. Mill, A. Blair, W. Gill; Londonderry—John Brettel, J. Gaffney; Belfast—T. Rutherford; Lisburn—J. Prickard, J. Hampson, jun. At the subsequent meeting of the Conference in England, however, Mr. Eells was appointed to Newcastle, and Mr. Rutherford to Dublin.

On the following Sunday Mr. Wesley conducted a covenant service. "It was a time never to be forgotten. God poured upon the assembly the Spirit of grace and of supplications, especially in singing that verse of the concluding hymn—

‘To each the covenant blood apply,
Which takes our sins away;
And register our names on high,
And keep us to that day.’”

On the three succeeding days Wesley visited many of those who had left the Society, but found them so deeply prejudiced that he could not advise them to return to it; and on July 19th he embarked for Liverpool, having spent more than fifteen weeks in Ireland.

On August the 4th that meeting of the British Conference began, which is memorable as the first at which the question of missions to the heathen was discussed. This debate arose in connection with a proposal to send missionaries to Africa, continued for several hours, and was marked by deep piety, sound sense, and powerful eloquence. The deepest impression, however, was made on the minds of all present, by the short speech of a young man far gone in consumption, who promptly offered himself as a missionary, and in unaffected language declared his readiness to go to Africa, or to any other part of the world to which it might please God and his brethren to send him.* That young man was an Irishman of great promise, James Gaffney,† who had travelled only two years, and was then received into full connexion; but his desire was not gratified, the way not being then open for such an undertaking; and in about eight months subsequently his pure and fervent spirit entered into everlasting light and glory.

Although the Rev. E. Smyth received no circuit appointment, he entered heartily into work for Christ in connection with Methodism. Having changed his residence from Downpatrick to Lurgan, he travelled through the kingdom, preaching in the open air and in the chapels, holding love-feasts and administering the Sacraments, and his labours were much blessed.

* *Methodist Magazine*, 1814, p. 508. † *City Road Magazine*, 1875, p. 568.

On arriving in Dublin Mr. Rutherford says he found many persons who were deeply serious, and much alive to God, with whom he took sweet counsel, and his soul was both quickened and comforted. But during the winter his superintendent, Mr. Watkinson, was laid aside for seven weeks, and as there was no other preacher in the city to assist, he had to preach every night and three times each Sunday. This he found difficult and laborious ; but it induced him to pray, to read, and to study hard, and the Lord helped him, so that he got through his work comfortably, and the people took knowledge that God was with him.*

Messrs. Hampson, sen., and Bradburn were appointed to Cork. The latter, who had just got married, says : " After a tedious and fatiguing journey, our reception in Cork was not very inviting ; however, all is peace at present, and I am resolved to live to God, and do all the good in my power." He reached Bandon on July 30th, and after spending a month in that town, exchanged with Hampson, and went to Cork, where he wrote in his diary—" Though the accommodation in Bandon is very disagreeable, yet, as my lovely Betsy is content, with her I cannot but be happy. In Cork we have all we want, and are surrounded with friends, many of whom are old experienced Christians, and truly alive to God."

The Bandon accommodation referred to was the room already described as forming part of the first chapel. Other preachers also felt the discomfort of this room. But Bradburn found compensation in Cork, for of the time spent there he writes : " This month has been very pleasant, and I humbly trust some good has been done. I feel much pleasure in preaching ; but by no means approve of addressing the same people every morning and evening without any change. Yet I find it useful, as it makes me read and study very closely. I feel an essential difference in this work, now that my mind is calm and happy, from when it was all confusion." This happiness did not continue, for he and Hampson quarrelled about the interchange : and Bradburn having referred the case to Wesley received the following reply—" I think you judge exactly

* *Methodist Magazine*, Dublin, 1808, p. 531.

right. You are called to obey *me* as a son in the Gospel. But who can prove that you are so-called to obey any other person? What I require (according to the twelfth rule of a helper) of John Hampson and you is, that each of you, in his turn, spend four weeks and no more—first at Cork and then at Bandon. When, therefore, you have been four weeks at Bandon, I desire you to return to Cork. And if John Hampson will not then go to Bandon, I will order one that will. Pray show this letter to Mr. Mackrill* whom I beg to assist you in this matter. Pass smoothly over the perverseness of those you have to do with, and go straight forward. It is abundantly sufficient that you have the testimony of a good conscience towards God."† This letter did not settle the quarrel. However, increase of experience brought a spirit of contentment.

Mr. Myles, who was stationed at Castlebar, says the people received him kindly, and he spent the year on the whole comfortably. The circuit was eighty miles in length, and embraced a part of each of the three provinces of Munster, Leinster and Connaught. The preachers regularly visited Castlebar, Ballinrobe, Tuam, Galway, Anghrim, Ballinasloe, Eyrecourt, Birr, Roscrea and Borrisnoe, besides many little villages and country places; but there were no societies in Tuam, Galway, or Ennis, and in many other places the members were few in number and the congregations small, the people being chiefly Roman Catholics.‡

There is the following noteworthy entry in the diary of Mr. Hern, who was on the Clones circuit—"Kilmore, Friday, September 4th. This day, at the request of friends, hearing it was customary for the preachers to do so in this Society, I baptized a child, and God was remarkably present." It is certainly singular that such an act was performed by one of the itinerants at so early a period, and especially after the strong pronouncement of the preceding Conference against leaving the Church.

In Londonderry the Rev. J. Abraham, not feeling happy or comfortable in his work, after much thought and prayer, re-

* One of the Cork leaders and stewards. † Life of S. Bradburn, pp. 68-70.

‡ *Arminian Magazine*, 1797, p. 212.

signed his chaplaincy, and offered his services to Mr. Wesley as a Methodist preacher,* which were accepted, and he was regularly appointed to the City road chapel, London.

On the Coleraine circuit, at this period, a young man was brought under the sound of the Gospel, who in time proved one of the most illustrious of the sons of Irish Methodism—that youth was Adam Clarke, who then resided in the parish of Ballyaghan, or Agherton. One day a school-fellow said to him : “ Adam, let us go to Burnside, there is a Methodist preacher to be there this evening, and we shall have nice fun,” and he consented, though without the slightest expectation of the promised diversion. He found many people assembled in a barn, and in a short time the preacher, Mr. John Brettel, entered, and with him, among others, Mr. Stephen Douthett of Coleraine. So deeply was the youth impressed, that he went again to the services, and thus entered upon his connection with Methodism, of which more again.

Chapter XXX.

1779.

EARLY in 1779 Thomas Barber began his itinerancy as a missionary on the country parts of the Londonderry circuit, where he was owned as an instrument of grace to many. He mentions as scenes of his hallowed toil, Portrush, Bushmills, Ballyaghan, Beardville, Portstewart and Mullaghacall, where he erected a small preaching-house, the first Methodist chapel in this district of country. At Ballycastle he was invited by a man in the neighbourhood to lodge at his house, where a door of usefulness seemed to be opened ; but the next time the preacher came he received a message requesting him to come no more. The poor man could not bear the ridicule of his neighbours, so he walked in the counsel of the ungodly, and

**Arminian Magazine*, 1788, pp. 609-10.

turned away the messenger of peace. It would have been well for that man and his family had he acted otherwise.*

Amongst those who went to hear the zealous and indefatigable evangelist was Mrs. Clarke, Adam's mother, who pronounced what she heard "the doctrine of the Reformation, true unadulterated Christianity," and urged her family to go and hear for themselves. Thus her husband was induced to attend the services, and being satisfied that what he heard was "the genuine doctrine of the Established Church," the preacher was invited to their house, which thenceforward became one of his regular stopping places. Through the preaching and godly counsels of Mr. Barber the mind of Adam became gradually enlightened, his desires after God strengthened, and consequently his interest in Methodism increased. He rejoiced to see numbers attending the word preached, and a Society formed in the adjoining village of Mullaghacall, though at the time he had no intention of becoming a member. His mother, however, having gone to see how the meetings were conducted, was so favourably impressed that she desired her son to accompany her on the next day of meeting. This he did with some reluctance, listened with deep attention, and was not a little surprised to hear one of his neighbours, who had been a foolish trifler, testify—"I was once in darkness, but now I am light in the Lord: I was once a slave of sin, but now I am made free by the grace of Christ: I once felt the horrors of a guilty conscience, but now I know and feel that God has blotted out my sins." Adam began to feel very uneasy, and left the meeting dissatisfied with himself. Returning home, the leader, Mr. Andrew Hunter, of Coleraine, overtook him on the road, spoke faithfully to him, and earnestly urged him to give his heart to God, adding—"You may be a burning and shining light;" but little dreamed how remarkably his words would be realized. The young man earnestly and perseveringly sought the Saviour, and at length, as in anguish of soul, he pleaded for mercy, the Lord lifted on him the light of His countenance, so that he rejoiced in the God of his salvation.†

Adam Clarke had a school-fellow named Andrew Coleman,

* *Irish Evangelist*, 1862, p. 26.

† *Life of A. Clarke, LL.D.*, pp. 84-99.

between whom and himself a warm friendship obtained. He was a young man of remarkable promise, had an amazingly comprehensive mind and retentive memory. He fathomed the depths of his studies, and could not be content with a superficial knowledge of any subject. At the age of fourteen he had not only the whole of the Book of Common Prayer by heart, but also had made himself such a master of the *Æneid* and of *Paradise Lost*, that on the mention of any line in either he could immediately tell the book in which it occurred and the number of the line. He also attended the ministry of Mr. Barber, his mind soon became enlightened as to the truth, and having earnestly sought redemption in the blood of Christ, he received it to the unspeakable joy of his heart. After some time he was employed as a leader, and at the earnest request of several began to hold meetings in different places through the country with great acceptance.*

Meanwhile on the Lisburn circuit an opening for preaching the word was obtained by Mr. Prickard at Kilkeel. At the time appointed for the service the house could not contain a quarter of those who desired to attend, so the faithful itinerant, irrespective of wind and weather, took his stand in the open air and preached for nearly an hour, while the hearers were as attentive as if they had been comfortably seated in church. This proved the beginning of a blessed work in the neighbourhood.

A severe trial, however, soon befell the Society on another part of the circuit. In February, 1779, the ship *Lydia*, richly laden with English and Irish manufactures, was wrecked near Sheep-land, and all the crew except one perished. Many of the members of the Society went with the rest of the country people to plunder the wreck, and others either bought, or received presents of the stolen goods. When Mr. Prickard, the Assistant of the circuit, visited the neighbourhood, he found that every Society, except that at Strangford, had partaken more or less of the spoil. Feeling deeply the moral wrong of what was thus done, his duty seemed plain, to expel the guilty parties from the Society, and to urge the necessity of repentance and

* *Life of A. Clarke, LL.D.*, pp. 113-15.

restitution. Accordingly on the following Sunday evening in the chapel at Downpatrick, he, with a bleeding heart, read out sixty-three who were implicated, adding that those who made restitution should be restored in due time, but those who declined to do so should have their names inserted in the general steward's book, with a record of their crime and obstinacy. This strict but faithful exercise of discipline proved beneficial; many of the offenders were deeply humbled before God, repented heartily of their sin, and made all the restitution they could, and even some who were not members, but attended the services, were convinced under the faithful preaching of the word, and desired also to unite in the act of indemnification. Mr. Prickard wrote to the owners of the vessel, stating the whole case, and desiring to know with whom he was to deposit what was restored. They replied, congratulating him on his connection with a people so open to conviction, and empowering him to allow salvage; but this he declined to do, considering the goods had been stolen. Thus the reproach that otherwise would have remained on the Methodists and prevented their usefulness was completely rolled away, and a most favourable impression created outside the Society.*

Valuable help was now rendered to the Society by the Rev. J. Creighton, who took an open and decided stand for Methodism, not confining his evangelistic labours to his own parish. Thus on the morning of March 31st, at Clones, in connection with the quarterly meeting, he preached in the open air: and then administered the Lord's supper in the chapel to upwards of three hundred persons, which proved to be a most remarkable time of God's power. In the afternoon Mr. Hern "preached in Mr. Armstrong's yard to a vast multitude." About a week later Mr. Creighton conducted a service on the hill of Knockninny, where a large concourse of people had assembled for a cock-fight. The poor Romanists who were present, however, were compelled by their priests to do penance for having listened to "a mad heretic." Other opportunities also were afforded the servant of God, in

* *Lives of the Early Methodist Preachers*, IV, pp. 186-89.

chapels, private houses and the open air, for proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation, which he faithfully and successfully availed himself of.

Owing to the death of Mr. Gaffney in Londonderry, at the request of Mr. Wesley, Henry Moore undertook to supply his place. Accordingly he set out for his circuit early in May, accompanied by the Rev. J. Abraham, who returned to his friends, not being considered by Mr. Wesley adapted to the work of the Methodist itinerancy. They spent the Sabbath *en route* at Clones, and were much cheered with what they saw there, the Society being "remarkable for the zeal, unanimity and love of its members." At Londonderry they found that Mr. John Brettel was about to start for England, leaving Mr. Barber to take his place. So Mr. Moore proceeded to Coleraine, the second place on the circuit, which even at this early period was the residence of one of the preachers, who had the charge of the adjoining country places, and interchanged with his colleague once in every three months. Mr. Moore says he never knew a Society more dead to the world, more alive to God, or more attached to Methodism, than in this town. The meetings were very lively, the congregations continued to increase, and there appeared to be a general pressing after holiness. He formed select bands, appointed a general meeting one evening in the week, preached himself every morning at five o'clock, and also frequently held meetings in the open air.*

Nor did this devoted young preacher confine his labours to his appointed round, but travelled to the regions beyond. Thus he visited Ballycastle, where he preached in the church green, and soon a little Society was formed of poor people, of whom a blacksmith and a shoemaker opened their houses to receive the preachers. Liberty was then obtained to conduct the services in the court-house, and large congregations attended. In a place at some distance there were two men, nominal Protestants, who, feeling the Sunday heavy on their hands, went to the Roman Catholic chapel, where the priest warned his flock to beware of false prophets, and to shew the

* Life of the Rev. H. Moore, pp. 47-54.

danger, said they were come to Ballycastle. The curiosity of the two strangers being thus excited, they resolved to go and hear the Methodists for themselves. This resulted in the conversion of both. One became a useful local preacher, and the other continued an attached member during a long life.*

In the course of this year, one of the itinerants preached in a field of Lieutenant Scott's, an officer of the yeomanry and a Methodist, who resided in the Derg country. Amongst those present were Mr. and Mrs. Robert Cather, of Carnony. As the servant of God spoke with deep feeling of the love of Christ, both of this worthy couple were convinced of sin, and soon after obtained peace in believing. They then opened their house to entertain the preachers. Mr. Cather gave up the use of tobacco in order to subscribe more liberally to the cause of God: and seeing a Christian professor return from the fair the worse of drink he resolved to give up the use of all intoxicating drinks. He died in peace in 1827, having been for forty-eight years a consistent and devoted member of the Society.†

Mr. Payne was at this time doing a noble work on the Athlone circuit. He writes to Mr. Wesley, that he had opened seven new places in twenty-eight days, that he was invited to three more on his return to that neighbourhood, that in one parish alone he had preached in fourteen different places, and then went to Captain Armstrong's, Ballycumber, where he preached to about three hundred persons. "Upon the whole," he says, "there is a great prospect of much good, and a general desire that the preaching may be continued."‡

The British Conference met on August the 3rd, when the reported increase of members in Ireland during the year amounted to six hundred and four. Although not named in the printed Minutes, the Rev. E. Smyth was appointed to the new chapel at Bath, being a part of the Bristol circuit, of which Mr. M'Nab was the Assistant.

William M'Cornock, who had been zealously labouring in the county of Donegal and had succeeded in forming several

* *Irish Evangelist*, 1862, p. 26.

† He was grandfather of the Rev. William and Dr. B. Cather.

‡ *Arminian Magazine*, 1789, pp. 385-86.

Societies, was called out into the itinerancy and appointed to the Enniskillen circuit. Although Methodism had been in the county of Fermanagh for sixteen or seventeen years, it was only now that it obtained a footing in the town of Enniskillen, where a few became members of the Society. They were much threatened by the inhabitants, yet no harm was done. At Drumbullion upwards of forty joined the Society, and at Florence Court the membership increased from about twelve to sixty.*

Of those who in this neighbourhood were brought under the influence of Methodism the most noteworthy was Daniel Bradshaw, Esq. He was a lineal descendant of the pious Bedell, Bishop of Kilmore, and in 1765, when about twenty years of age, purchased and made his residence at Violet Hill, where he was on friendly terms with the noble family of Cole. Here he got acquainted with the Methodists; and through the Divine blessing became anxious about his soul. Lord Enniskillen observing the change in his spirit, determined to draw him away from association with those who had caused this, as he thought, unnecessary seriousness; and with this object invited him to an entertainment at his house, to which Mr. Bradshaw went very reluctantly. But as soon as the frivolous amusements of the evening began, he slipped away, went to the usual preaching service, and before it concluded was enabled to believe with the heart unto righteousness. He immediately joined the Society, was soon appointed a leader, and opened his house for the preaching of the Gospel. In time that neighbourhood presented a changed appearance, new classes were formed, and the once Sabbath-breaking country became a land of prayer and praise. Lord Enniskillen and his family seeing the great moral transformation in the people, became favourable to Methodism, and his descendants have continued so to the present day. Mr. Bradshaw also during a long life gave clear and strong evidence of his deep love for God and sincere attachment to the Society.†

At this period the first regiment of dragoons was quartered

* *Arminian Magazine*, 1785, p. 188.

† *Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1852, pp. 317-19; and *Irish Evangelist*, 1861, p. 188.

in Lisburn, one of the non-commissioned officers of which was George Foster, a young man who had been led into folly and sin by ungodly companions, and enlisted in the army. He had a pious mother, who continued to plead earnestly for her wayward son, until the prayers of earth were lost in the praises of heaven. On the very night her spirit entered endless felicity, Foster was roused to a sense of his state by a solemn and affecting dream. He thought that the day of judgment was come, and that the Judge looked at him with much displeasure, as he stood trembling with guilt and fear before the dread tribunal—a condemned sinner. He awoke, thankful that it was but a dream, and that there was still time for repentance. The vivid impressions then made were deepened by the sad intelligence of his mother's death; so he resolved to forsake sin, and seek the Lord with all his heart. He was thus led to become a member of the Methodist Society. Having found the Saviour, he spoke to his comrade, Joseph Burgess, who began to think seriously about the salvation of his soul, and to accompany Foster to the Methodist chapel. While listening to a sermon preached by Mr. Boothby, the Assistant on the circuit, Burgess also renounced his sinful practices, received the word with joy, and resolved to become a Methodist.*

Mr. Myles, who was then the junior preacher in Lisburn, says the people were of almost all religious persuasions, and each zealous for his own peculiar opinions. They frequently attended the Methodist services, and were eager to dispute with the preachers, especially with regard to Calvinism. But he very wisely, not having studied the subject thoroughly, abstained from controversy, and applied his mind to the careful examination of the works of Fletcher and Wesley.

Other preachers, however, did not escape so easily. Mr. Mill, a Scotchman, who entered the itinerancy in 1774, and spent four years in Ireland, was reluctantly drawn into a public discussion, apparently on the Armagh circuit. Four ministers who were opposed to Methodism openly and derisively challenged him, and Mr. R. Lindsay, an Irishman who had emigrated to America, where in 1774 he was received on trial,

* Memoirs of the Rev. J. Burgess, pp. 15-17.

and after having laboured there a few years, returned to his native land. Accordingly, the challenge being accepted, a platform was erected in a field, and the discussion entered upon. During the debate, Mr. Mill especially displayed such thorough mastery of the subject in dispute, readiness of reply, and firmness of purpose, as completely to silence his opponents, and thus to strengthen and establish the Society in the neighbourhood, where it had been much distracted.

In some cases opposition assumed a more intolerant form, and the servants of God suffered open persecution. Once Mr. Mill was delivered from his adversaries by fixing his eyes upon the most violent of them, until the miscreant crept away ashamed. At another time he wrenched a sword out of the hand of a villain, who rushed on him with savage fury while he was preaching.*

Mr. Wm. Myles refers to the encouraging opening for preaching at Kilkeel, on going to which on one occasion he was nearly involved in a serious row, through reproving a Roman Catholic for swearing. A mob gathered in the town and surrounded the house in the evening during the service, but did no other harm than to throw some stones.

He was also instrumental in introducing Methodism into Dromore. Having taken his stand in the street, he proceeded to call sinners to repentance, and as he was thus engaged an excise officer, under the influence of drink, came out of a public house, and having sworn that he would kill the preacher, drew a sword and made a thrust at him. But an inn-keeper perceiving his intention struck his arm, and thus frustrated the wicked purpose. Mr. Myles exhorted the congregation not to resent the assault, and finished his discourse in peace. A few weeks subsequently the excise man got into a quarrel and was killed. From that time the preachers met with no further molestation in the town, and a Society was formed.† Of this little band of devoted Christians the only information now available is, that the name of one of them was Maria M'Neill, who is remembered by some of the oldest inhabitants as a poor

* *Methodist Magazine*, Dublin, 1807, p. 292.

† *Arminian Magazine*, 1797, pp. 261-62.

but respectable widow, who lived in Meeting street, and in whose house the services were conducted.

About this time there were four men—Tate, Shaw, Gallagher, and another—in Armagh under sentence of death for theft. Mr. Mill visited them, and was made a great blessing to Tate, who declared that God for Christ's sake had forgiven all his sins. The others at first seemed very hardened; but at length while Mr. Bates, who also evinced much interest in their spiritual welfare, showed them the evil of sin and its terrible consequences, Shaw became greatly agitated, and with tears inquired, "Do you think God will forgive me?" When the servant of the Lord returned, Tate exclaimed, "Glory to God, I still feel a sense of His pardoning love." "Are you ever tempted to doubt your acceptance?" inquired Mr. Bates. "Yes," said he, "but I look to Jesus, and the tempter flies." While they were speaking, Shaw came forward and said that God had pardoned his sins, and other prisoners being present they exhorted them to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus. The day before their execution the Lord had mercy on Gallagher also, and gave him a sense of His favour. On the day on which they suffered the penalty of their crime, Messrs. Mill and Bates went to them early in the morning and continued with them until they were led forth to execution, when Tate bore a public testimony to his acceptance with God, through the merits of Christ Jesus. As thousands witnessed the happy end of these men, the news of it spread far and wide, and many who had been much prejudiced against Methodism resolved to go and hear for themselves, by which means much good resulted.*

In the South of Ireland also there were not wanting tokens of the Divine blessing. On October 27th, Mr. Bredin wrote to Mr. Wesley giving an account of the work on the Cork circuit. He says that when he arrived at Bandon he found the Society much scattered, as there had been no preaching there for a long time, no early morning service for several years, and no meetings of the children for more than twenty years. When he stated to the Society that he intended to resume these neglected

* *Methodist Magazine*, Dublin, 1805, pp. 194-95.

services, he was told he need not attempt it; but he persevered, and the results were far beyond his expectations, the morning congregations being four times as large as those in Cork, and there were tokens of a great reformation amongst the children.

Mr. Bredin also visited Skibbereen, where no Methodist preacher had been before. As he knew no one in the town, committing his cause to God, he alighted at a house, and requested the occupant to go to the magistrate for the key of the courthouse. He did so, and the key was sent most courteously. A very large congregation assembled, including the collector of the town, who kept the people from making any disturbance. Having preached three times, Mr. Bredin returned to Bandon, and received a letter by the next post requesting him to return to the west as soon as he could do so conveniently, and promising that his expenses should be paid. As he could not do so immediately, Mr. Bradburn, the Assistant on the circuit, said he would go: and they subsequently arranged to visit the town once a fortnight.* Such was the introduction of Methodism into Skibbereen, where the Society has had for many years a most interesting and flourishing cause.

Chapter XXXI.

1780.

ABOUT the commencement of 1780 a great alarm was raised through the United Kingdom respecting a Bill which Parliament had passed in favour of the Roman Catholics, by which they were relieved from the rigour of certain penal statutes. A Protestant Association was formed to obtain a repeal of this Act, and pamphlets were published on both sides of the question. Amongst others, Wesley stated his sentiments on the subject in a letter, dated January the 21st, which he sent to

* *Arminian Magazine*, 1789, pp. 611-18.

the printer of the *Public Advertiser*. After premising that he wished no man to be persecuted for his religious principles, he laid down the general proposition, "That no Roman Catholic does or can give security to a Protestant Government for his allegiance and peaceable behaviour;" and rested his proof on the maxim, "No faith is to be kept with heretics," which was openly avowed by the Council of Constance, and never openly disclaimed; as well as on the acknowledgment by Roman Catholics of priestly absolution and the dispensing power of the Pope. "Although Wesley's views in relation to the Roman Catholic question were somewhat similar to those advocated by Milton and Locke, it would have been better had he not published them just then, and in connection with the Protestant Association. Out of the agitations of that body, with its monster petition to Parliament, arose the disgraceful Gordon riots, when bishops, peers and commoners were mobbed, Roman Catholic and Nonconformist chapels wrecked, and Wesley's own new chapel at City road, it is thought, had a narrow escape. Charles Wesley's illustrious schoolfellow, the great Lord Mansfield, saw his library and manuscripts in flames. This vandalism provoked the muse of Cowper, and the indignation of Charles Wesley expressed itself in satirical verse."

Several adversaries soon arose, the most conspicuous of whom was the Rev. Arthur O'Leary, a Roman Catholic priest, who published in the *Freeman's Journal*, "Remarks" on the letter of Mr. Wesley, as well as that of another signed "J. W.," in defence of the Protestant Association, to which Wesley replied. In this controversy O'Leary endeavoured in vain to explain away the obnoxious decree, and by shafts of wit and drollery to overcome his opponent. The decree of the Council could not be got over, and the reasoning of Mr. Wesley therefore remained unanswered, or as Mr. Skelton said, his proposition was a wall of adamant, and Mr. O'Leary's arguments were as boiled peas shot against it.* A few years subsequently, when Mr. Wesley was in Cork, he was invited to breakfast with Mr. O'Leary, and speaks thus candidly of his old antagonist: "I was not at all displeased at being disappointed. He was not

* Moore's *Life of Wesley*, II., p. 277.

the stiff, queer man that I expected, but of an easy, genteel carriage, and seems not to be wanting in either sense or learning.”*

On February 26th Wesley wrote to Mr. Bradburn, congratulating him on having such “an honest and sensible fellow-labourer” as Mr. Bredin, and expressing his hope to visit Ireland in spring.† His friends, however, advised him not to cross the channel, as they feared, on account of the recent controversy, the Irish would do him injury, so he gave up his intention for this year.

During the first six months of 1780 Mr. M’Cornoock was on the Sligo circuit, and says he visited many places where the people never heard a Methodist preacher before, and was kindly received. He also went out of the circuit to Ballina and Killala, where the people were well pleased to hear the word of the Lord.‡

In some instances the preachers had still to endure terrible persecution. Thus at Clara a magistrate, who could not prevail upon his wife and daughter to desist from attending the Methodist services, hired twenty-four Romanists, divided them into three companies, and stationed them on three roads leading to the place where the itinerant—probably Mr. Halliday—was about to preach, in order to waylay him. Thus the preacher, ignorant of any danger, suddenly found himself surrounded by eight ruffians, who knocked him down and beat him most cruelly with knotted sticks. They then produced a book, and insisted that he should swear upon it he never would preach in that place again, which he refused to do. They therefore drew their knives, swore they would cut the heart out of him, tore and cut all his clothes to pieces, and when they had stripped him naked, dragged him by the hair into a pond, beating him all the way, and then leaving him to perish. When he recovered his senses, naked and sorely bruised, he was just able to crawl to a friend’s house at some distance.

On his next visit to this place, where there was a large congregation and a lively Society, the preacher was accompanied by Mr. Hall, who was then stationed on the adjoining

* Wesley’s Works, IV., p. 374. † Ibid. XIII., p. 124.

‡ *Arminian Magazine*, 1785, pp. 187-88.

circuit—Athlone—having gone there in the place of Mr. N. Price. On the first evening they met with no interruption; but on the following day, as they and some friends were on the road, three persons who ought to have been gentlemen, with their footmen, suddenly surrounded the Methodists, and one presenting a pistol at Mr. Hall, insisted that he should promise to leave that neighbourhood, and never return; but he firmly refused, so long as he regarded the salvation of his own soul and that of others. The miscreant then swore that he would lodge the contents of the pistol in his body; but the servant of God, nothing daunted, opened his breast, and said he would die rather than sin against his conscience. The rowdy, finding that threats failed, took a sword, and lifting it up to heaven, swore by the Eternal God he would cut the preacher in two; but the glittering of the sword frightened the horse, so that he suddenly sprang forward, which in all probability saved the life of the rider, who felt the weapon graze his back ere the saddle received the blow. The preacher then stood his ground, expostulated with his assailant, and expressed his willingness to answer to lawful authority if he had done anything contrary to law: so they arranged to go at once to a magistrate. But they had not gone far when the gentlemen espied a number of men in a field, whom they called to come with their spades and forks and beat the Methodists. The poor wretches readily responded, and sprang over the ditch, as fierce as tigers; but Mr. Hall told them that if they dared to assault him, they must expect to be punished according to law, which so confounded them that they were afraid to do anything, notwithstanding the terrible vociferations and execrations of those who incited them to lawlessness and cruelty. Meantime the wife of the magistrate having heard of the intentions of the young men, hastened to the place to prevent mischief, and as soon as they saw her one of them exclaimed, "Oh! we shall break her heart," and all spurred their horses and took to flight. The coolness and firmness of Mr. Hall so overcame his persecutors, that he was not hindered from preaching that evening. At the close of the service the members of Society, with many tears, entreated the preachers not to forsake them: and they promised; but the excitement, together with fatigue and exposure, brought

on Mr. Hall an attack of fever, in which he lay for weeks deprived of reason.

Meanwhile the justice of the peace who, through vile calumnies, had been incensed against the Methodists, when he found that the violence of his son and nephews proved ineffectual in deterring the preachers from visiting that part of the country, and not being able to persuade his wife to desist from hearing them, compelled her to leave his house, so that for some time she resided with a relative at Mountrath. In that neighbourhood the magistrate had a connection who also held the commission of the peace, and this gentleman, together with a local clergyman, determined to attack the Methodists in the preaching-house; but having remained too long at their bottle, when they arrived the people had gone; so they broke open the door, and wrecked their vengeance on the benches and windows. The clergyman then thought they had done their duty and returned home; but the magistrate was not so easily satisfied. He found the house where the preacher, Mr. J. Hampson, jun., lodged, and entering it seized him by the throat. At that instant three young men ran to the rescue of the itinerant; but as the justice persisted in his hostile proceedings, they were obliged to settle the affair in his own way, in consequence of which he remained for some time subsequently under the doctor's care.

The lady above-mentioned was reduced to the disagreeable necessity of removing to Dublin, and obtaining a separate maintenance from her husband. He also sent his daughter to the metropolis, under the care of two of his sisters, with a strict charge not to suffer her to go near the Methodists. But the young lady eluded the vigilance of her aunts, and in her flight from them one morning providentially met with her mother going to the Methodist chapel. After they had been exercised for a season with many distresses, God mercifully interposed on their behalf. The daughter was married to a pious young gentleman of family and fortune, by whose wise and prudent conduct prejudice and misunderstandings were removed, and a happy reconciliation effected in each branch of the family.*

At the Conference Messrs. Pilmoor and Thomas were

* *Arminian Magazine*, 1793, p. 455-59.

appointed to Dublin. Amongst those who heard the former preach his first sermon in entering on his new circuit was a young man named Walter Griffith, a native of Clogheen, in the county of Tipperary, who was then engaged in business in the city. Prompted by curiosity he went to Whitefriar street chapel, and was so impressed with the service that he resolved to become a Methodist, and soon after began to meet in Mr. John Dinnen's class. From this time his soul was penetrated with a conviction of his guilt and depravity, and he sorrowed after a godly sort : but during several subsequent months severe temptations, arising from a naturally reserved disposition, and mistaken views of Divine truth, retarded him from finding that blessing which he ultimately obtained, and which laid the foundation of a most devoted and useful Christian career.*

At this period Mrs. Slacke, of Annadale, in the county Leitrim, was accustomed to visit Dublin, and enter with zest into the worldly amusements and festivities which obtained in the metropolis at certain seasons. On one of these occasions, about the year 1780, she lodged in the house of Alderman Exshaw, a printer and bookseller, with whom Bennett Dugdale, Matthias Joyce and Robert Napper lived as journeymen or apprentices. All three were truly devoted to God ; and as they slept in the same room, it was their practice before retiring to rest to read and pray. Their room was immediately above the apartment occupied by Mrs. Slacke : so she frequently heard sounds which for some time she could not understand. At length, prompted by curiosity, she went quietly upstairs and listened at their door. Impressed first with the novelty, and then with the propriety, of such religious exercises, she was led to repeat her visits, until her conscience became awakened. Although a lady of most accomplished manners, and one who had mixed in fashionable society, she now discovered there was in religion something to make the soul happy, to which she was a stranger. Upon inquiry she found that the young men were members of the then much-despised Methodist Society, towards which she felt a strange attraction, that led her to venture to hear preaching in Whitefriar street chapel. The word was greatly

* *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1827, p. 75.

blessed to her : she became earnestly desirous of salvation, and was enabled to accept Christ as her Saviour.

On her return home Mrs. Slacke resolved to exert her influence to introduce Methodism into the family and neighbourhood. But fully aware of her husband's prejudices, she felt it needful to proceed with great caution. She first prevailed on Mr. Slacke to invite to their house the Rev. J. Creighton, who not only came and preached, but also promised to return, and being very friendly with Mr. Blair, the preacher then stationed in Sligo, engaged him also to go to Annadale on his next visit. When the appointed time came Mr. Creighton preached in the morning, and after the service asked Mr. Slacke if he had any objection to a Methodist preacher giving them a discourse in the evening. His heart had been touched by the sermon, and he consented, but inquired, "Where is he?" When Mr. Blair, whose appearance was very youthful, was pointed out to him, he expressed his astonishment, saying, "What, that boy a preacher!" Mr. Blair, who possessed more than ordinary ministerial talent, delivered a most impressive discourse, which was made a great blessing to Mr. Slacke and his family. Thenceforward the Methodist preachers regularly visited and were most kindly and hospitably entertained at Annadale.

From the time of Mrs. Slacke's conversion, her life was one of unostentatious but active devotion and benevolence. She became an intelligent, humble, and devoted witness of the doctrine of entire sanctification, as taught in the Word of God, and preached by the Wesleys. The Rev. A. Averell writes of her : "I never knew a more decided follower of the Saviour than was this truly lovely woman. With an elegant person, were united in her all that results from a liberal education, sound judgment, an enlarged knowledge of Divine truth, deep experience in the things of God, a cheerful and lively address, and a spirit sweetly tempered by love to God, and zeal for His glory."*

Thomas Payne and Thomas Barber were appointed to the Waterford circuit. During the year, as the result of the

* Memoir of Rev. A. Averell, p. 166

Divine blessing on the faithful labours of these excellent men, there was a very gracious and cheering revival in the city, especially amongst young people, many of whom, by their subsequent holy lives and peaceful deaths, testified to the reality of the blessed change they had experienced.* Among those who, at this time, were brought into connection with Methodism, was William Curry, then a young man. Mrs. Ball found him out, and persuaded him to meet in class. He was appointed by Mr. Wesley a leader in Dublin, and for about sixty years laboured for his Redeemer.†

This year the celebrated John Crickett was sent from England to labour on the Lisleen circuit. He was a plain, earnest, albeit somewhat eccentric and very old-fashioned Methodist preacher, chiefly remarkable for his great simplicity in worldly matters. Stories relating to him have long furnished a large contribution to the fund of Methodistical anecdote. Unsophisticated to an astonishing degree, apparently unable to understand the ordinary conventionalities of society, he was, withal, a man of unaffected piety and of pulpit power. On his list of stopping places are the familiar names of Mr. Boyle, Mrs. Brown, Joseph Carson, Omagh; Joseph Gray, Lislap; and S. Steele, Magheracoltan.

Mr. Henry Moore was appointed Assistant of the Charlemont circuit, which he found was very extensive, without any provision for a married preacher in the shape of a residence; so as he and his wife could not get lodgings elsewhere, they settled in Tanderagee, where the people were very poor but very devoted, and their religion was exemplary and powerful. In, for the first time, going through his circuit, which required six weeks, he came to Glaslough on a Saturday, which was market day, and having no direction to any particular person, he let his horse walk slowly into the town, thinking that some member of the Society would probably recognize him. Accordingly he saw a lusty man leave one of the stalls, and placing himself right in his way, hold up his hand and vociferate, "I know what you are." "Do you?" said the

* Minutes of the Irish Conference, II., p. 175.

† *Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1843, pp. 99, 100.

preacher, "then perhaps you can tell where I am to go." "Follow me," cried the stranger, as he stalked forward and brought Mr. Moore to the house of Betty Brown, "an Israelite indeed," who entertained the preachers. On going to the stable to see after his horse, the servant of God was followed by his unknown guide, who immediately began to inform him of the distress of his soul, which was so great that he "roared by reason of the disquietness of his heart." Suitable counsel was then given to the poor penitent, who had grieved the Spirit of God.

The history of this man was most remarkable. His name was Bartley Campbell. He had been a Romanist, and had lived in the usual ungodly manner of the members of that Church then; but the Holy Spirit failed not "to convince him of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment;" and poor Bartley hardened not his heart. He went to the priest, made confession, was enjoined penance, and directed to repeat certain prayers, after which he received absolution; but he found this would not do: his distress increased, and, as he said, hell was open before his eyes. He applied to other priests, and faithfully performed what he was commanded, but only realized additional misery. He at length resolved he would go to Lough Derg, where it was supposed all sin could be expiated. He walked thither, a distance of about fifty miles: and having arrived, passed to the small island, half a mile from the shore, called St. Patrick's Purgatory, and applied to one of the priests in waiting, who prescribed the prayers and penances usually enjoined. These, though severe, he fulfilled with the greatest exactness, and then again received absolution. But, as in the former cases, it availed nothing. The cloud of the Divine displeasure remained, and guilt pressed still more heavily on his conscience. He returned to the priest, who inquired concerning the fulfilment of his instructions, all of which he was assured had been most faithfully attended to. "Did I not give you absolution?" said the priest. "You did, father." "And do you deny the authority of the Church?" "By no means," replied the poor man, "but my soul is in misery. What shall I do?" "Do," said the priest, "why, go to bed and sleep." "Sleep!" answered the awakened sinner, "no, father; perhaps I might

awake in hell." The conversation abruptly ended with a threat of a good horsewhipping.

Poor Bartley, departing with his load of guilt, and seeking a retired place, cast himself on the ground, and gave vent to his anguish in loud cries and tears. After some time he found a desire to pray, and anguish gave utterance to his troubled spirit. He called upon Christ, pleaded His precious blood, and in a moment all his distress was gone, and an assurance given that the Lord had taken away his sins, so that the peace of God filled his soul. Having praised the riches of Divine grace, he returned in transport to the priest, crying out, "O, father, I am happy! I have found the cure!" His pastor replied with execrations, and a renewed threat of chastisement. Thus repelled, he thought of home; but recollecting having seen a number of persons performing their penances, he hastened to the place, told them of the cure, and of the jewel, as he called the knowledge of salvation, stating his own experience of the worthlessness of their penances, and of the willingness of Christ to save. But a cry arose that he was interrupting the penitents, and the priests, with a number of the votaries of superstition, hastening to the place, he was obliged to escape at the peril of his life. He reached home "a new creature," happy in God; and at once earnestly exhorted his wife to turn to the Lord, who, for Christ's sake, would give her the same happiness as he possessed. The poor woman answered only with tears, and really feared that he was gone mad. At length, being still in some degree under the influence of superstition, he thought of the place where God had spoken peace to his soul, and declared that his wife must go thither with him, and the Lord would make her happy there. Her lamentations availed not. Her pleading the two little ones only prompted the reply, "They shall go, too." He yoked his horse, carried out the bed, placed the mother and children on it, and set out on this extraordinary pilgrimage. Having arrived at the place, he brought the affrighted woman to the scene of his distress and deliverance, and earnestly exhorted her to call upon God, who, for Christ's sake, would forgive her sins, and make her happy in His love. But the godly sorrow that had brought him with strong cries and tears to the throne of grace, had no

place in the heart of the almost distracted woman : so having spent some time there, poor Bartley saw that it was no use, and that he must return and betake himself to labour to gain "the meat that perisheth" for his family, and seek for himself "that meat which endureth unto everlasting life."

Shortly after he met with and related what the Lord had done for his soul to a priest who was much affected, and could only answer with tears. After a few visits he acknowledged that he experienced a similar work when a young man; but had lost the blessing, and long walked in darkness. Bartley exhorted him to look for the cure, be faithful with his flock, and tell them of the happiness that awaited them if they would turn to God. The priest became alarmed, and charged him not to speak a word to the people on that subject, for they could not bear it. "Father," cried the earnest man, "they will all go to hell, and you will go there too, if you hide the cure from them. I will tell all that I come near, and you will soon see what good will be done, only do not oppose me." The priest reiterated his admonitions, and Bartley departed, fully determined to speak and labour for the Lord.

Soon after the priest gave notice that he would celebrate mass in an old burial-ground in the neighbourhood. Bartley attended, and when the service concluded, he stepped up and said, "Father, you are to christen a bairn in the village; go, and leave the people to me. The dead souls you see are standing over the dead bodies, and I hope the Lord will awaken the uppermost." "Take care what you do," said the intimidated priest. "Make no disturbance, I charge you," and then left. Bartley began at once to lay before the staring multitude his own former miserable condition, and the efforts he had vainly made for deliverance. But when he came to speak from the fulness of his heart of the cure and the jewel, how Christ had blotted out his sins and given him to enjoy His love, so that, said he, "I am happy all the day long, and I no more fear to die than to go to sleep," the effect was astonishing. A general and piercing cry arose, almost the whole assembly fell on their knees, while some lay prostrate, groaning with deep anguish. The cry was heard at the village, the priest hurried to the spot, and demanded of the

speaker how he dared thus to disturb his flock ; but was only answered with earnest entreaties not to hinder the work of God. "You rascal," said the priest, "do you oppose the Church?" "No, father," he replied, "I have found the Church." "You villain," said the priest, "Begone!" and struck him on the head with his horsewhip. Poor Bartley felt "an old man's bone in him," and hardly knowing what he did, gave the priest a push that threw him over a grave, heels up and head down. A general commotion was the result, and the people, seeing that he had knocked the priest down, were all eager to lay hands on the culprit. Lamentations for sin gave place to execrations, and poor Bartley was obliged to fly for his life. Although he escaped the vengeance of the infuriated multitude, his conscience received a wound, and he went mourning all the day long, not knowing how to recover his happiness. Soon after he met with some of the Methodists, who understood his case, and encouraged him to come again to the "fountain opened for sin and uncleanness."

Such was his state of mind when he first met Mr. Moore ; he continued with the Society, fully recovered his peace, and afterwards became very useful. He had a strong mind, great ardency of spirit, and was perfectly master of the Irish language. He could not be satisfied with any meeting where there were none convinced of sin, or enabled to rejoice in God their Saviour. He called it a sham fight.

On arriving at Newry Mr. Moore was requested by Mr. Kennedy to go and see a lady supposed to be dying, who had often expressed a wish to be thus visited, to which her husband, a Socinian, had objected, but now withdrew his objection. Mr. Moore accordingly went, and was introduced to a most interesting young lady, apparently approaching her end ; but when he attempted to pray for her as a dying person, he felt so embarrassed that he could hardly utter a sentence without hesitation, and when he prayed for her recovery he had great liberty. On leaving, her husband was hardly courteous, notwithstanding which the preacher repeated his visit, and again, in pleading with God, amazed all who were present by the importunity and confidence of his faith. On returning to the town at the end of six weeks he found that prayer had

been answered in her restoration to health, that her husband had withdrawn all opposition, and she, having become a member of the Society, had obtained redemption through the blood of Christ.

Messrs. Carlill and Hall were stationed on the Lisburn circuit, where they had as favourable opportunities for being useful as could be expected, the congregations being large in general, and many new places received them gladly. However, Mr. Carlill, who had just come from England, though an excellent man, did not appreciate the Green Isle, which made his position neither pleasant to himself nor profitable to the people, so he only remained the year on this side of the channel; but Mr. Hall was happy and useful in his work. One of the most notable conversions of the year was that of a Deist, whom it pleased the Lord to awaken to a sense of his state and danger at one of the services, which some of his friends persuaded him to attend. The next time Mr. Hall preached, the earnest seeker obtained a knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins, and became a faithful witness of the truth, to the joy of his friends, and the astonishment of his Deistical acquaintances.*

Chapter XXXII.

1781.

THE Rev. J. Creighton, although still retaining his curacy, continued to make occasional preaching excursions through the surrounding country. Thus on January the 23rd, 1781, he preached at Ballyconnell to a large congregation, and while he met the Society two persons found peace, and one backslider was restored. Shortly after he preached again in the same place, there being then a great revival. On April the 25th he preached at Enniskillen, near the walls of the old castle, to a careless people. Some ladies strolled about, and diverted them-

* *Arminian Magazine*, 1793, p. 621-22.

selves in talking aloud during the service. In this town a chapel was built during the preceding year.

In June, at the Bishop's visitation, two doctors of divinity having entered into conversation with Mr. Creighton, passed some encomiums, which he did not expect on two sermons that he had published. They said his doctrines were Scriptural, and entirely in harmony with the teaching of the Church, but disapproved of his preaching outside his own parish. He took occasion subsequently to write to them on the subject, and received their replies. One of them was calm and friendly, reminding him that he had a family, and stating that the writer had spoken favourably of him to a nobleman who was related to a bishop, so he might expect promotion shortly. The other doctor, however, was very warm, and argued at length against irregular preaching. But neither the specious promises of the one, nor the plausible arguments of the other, made much impression on Mr. Creighton, who told them both that he never had any fruit to his labours until he became irregular, and that he was persuaded were he to confine himself to one congregation he would not only soon become useless, but also lose the life of God in his soul.

About this time Mr. Creighton began to preach at a place near Cavan, and continued to do so once a fortnight while he remained in this country. When a number of the hearers were awakened he explained to them the nature of the Society, and formed fourteen of them into a class on the first night. To these others were added, until after some time there were about four score, the greater part of whom had obtained remission of sins. Meantime the vicar of the parish sent for him, and threatened to complain of him to the Bishop, saying that if he and those fellows who were itinerating the country continued to go on thus the churches would soon be deserted. Mr. Creighton replied that their preaching tended rather to bring men into the churches; and that he must obey God rather than men, and therefore was determined to preach whenever and wherever it seemed to him to be right. Shortly after many who had been Presbyterians attended the church of his objector and received the Sacrament. Mr. Creighton also sent to him two Roman Catholics, to read their recantation as a proof that

he was bringing the people into, and not driving them from the church. Opposition then arose from another quarter. Some Romanists waylaid the leader of the infant Society, Mr. Robert Creighton, to murder him, who, having received intimation of their intention, returned by another way, and thus escaped.

In August Mr. Creighton visited Bundoran, where he preached frequently in the cottages on the sea shore. On one occasion, as he conducted a service in the house of a Roman Catholic woman, several of her neighbours who were Romanists assembled in the kitchen and threatened to drive out all that were in the room, but they were restrained by Divine power.*

Mr. Creighton also seized the opportunity while in this neighbourhood of visiting the Society at Carricknahorna, where during the year the following valuable additions were made to the membership—three brothers, John, William and George M'Cornock and their four sisters; Thomas Elliott, and Anthony Lowry. John M'Cornock was appointed a leader, which office he sustained with fidelity for upwards of half a century. William, a man of good strong sense, entered the itinerancy in 1787 and died in 1834 in great peace. Thomas Elliot was "a deeply pious and zealous man" with "good gifts," who in 1788 also entered the itinerancy, but the Lord was pleased to remove him in the prime of life. He died of consumption, brought on by excessive labours. Anthony Lowry was the Gaius of this country, and opened his house for the entertainment of the preachers.†

Meanwhile in the north death removed hence one of the most devoted and consistent of the members, Mrs. Johnstone, of Lisleen, truly "a mother in Israel," whose saintly life, faithful testimony, and self-denying charity ought never to be forgotten by Irish Methodists. Fourteen days after the removal of this excellent lady, and in the same district of country, Hugh Brown also was called to join the Church triumphant. Owing to the delicate state of his health he had been compelled to retire from the itinerancy three years previously. He suffered much from a nervous disorder, but his end was peace.

* *Arminian Magazine*, 1785, p. 398-400.

† *Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1840, p. 287-88

But to pass from the north to the south of Ireland. At Bandon an important addition was made to the Society in Miss Alice Cambridge. Her father belonged to the Established Church, of which she ever considered herself a member: and her mother was a Presbyterian. Taken from school when very young, she had not the advantages of a liberal education; but subsequently endeavoured, as far as possible by reading, to supply this serious lack. She acquired a taste for light literature which could not tend to healthy mental culture, until in 1780 a severe trial, in the death of her mother, turned her attention to spiritual and eternal things.

Soon afterwards she began to attend the services in the Methodist preaching-house, and under a sermon preached by Mr. Myles was deeply convinced of sin. She then returned home to do what she had never done before—to pray: and continued for some time earnestly seeking the pardoning mercy of God, diligently using the means of grace, and greatly encouraged by the members of Society. At length, at a band meeting, as one of those present related her religious experience, the Lord lifted on Miss Cambridge the light of His countenance, so that she was enabled through grace to magnify the Lord, and rejoice in the God of her salvation. From that hour, as she could affirm many years after, not only did she never once doubt that God had then and there blotted out her sins and accepted her as His child, but also she never thought or did anything which He gave her to know was wrong.

Feeling an earnest desire to bring others into the way of peace, the young convert went to her former companions, told them what the Lord had done for her soul, and urged them to seek the same priceless blessing. Some laughed at what seemed to them novel and foolish fancies; others listened with apparent attention, but continued to pursue their old course; and a few were led to believe in the Lord Jesus as their Saviour.

Miss Cambridge gave unmistakable evidence of the reality of the glorious change which the Lord had wrought, and of her determination to be fully devoted to Him, by an act which must have cost her a bitter pang. Having consented to marry a young man to whom she was much attached, but who had

not given his heart to Jesus, she at once ended an engagement which was contrary to the Word of God, and could not be accompanied with the Divine blessing.

Entering upon her religious course in this spirit of complete submission to the will of God, Miss Cambridge could not fail to make rapid progress in holiness, becoming increasingly dead to the world and alive to God. As in prayer her soul was drawn out in earnest desire for more love and purity and power, she was often favoured with seasons of abundant spiritual blessing. As her love to God and desire for full conformity to His image increased, so did her zeal for the salvation of souls, but she knew not how to reach the unsaved. At first she thought, having been herself so blessed under the word, if she only could get them to the preaching-house to hear the gospel message, they would surely be made willing to receive salvation. So she invited her friends and neighbours. Many did respond, for the Lord gave her favour in the sight of the people, and often, with wistful eyes and praying heart, she would look round for tokens of spiritual anxiety, or religious concern, which she endeavoured to follow up with suitable words of counsel, of warning, or of encouragement. Thus some were led to the Saviour.

On April 12th Mr. Wesley with three of the preachers embarked for Dublin, intending to travel through the country as usual ; but encountered a violent tempest for two days and two nights, when they were driven back into Holyhead harbour. Under these circumstances, the more he considered the subject the more he was convinced that it was not the will of God he should visit Ireland this year, so the project was for a second time abandoned.

Mr. Bredin was at this time stationed on the Athlone circuit, where many were drawn to hear him, and the word preached was accompanied with such power that several were convinced of sin and became members of the Society. Amongst others Miss Penington, then a girl of fourteen, afterwards Mrs. Burgess, was brought to see her sinful state, and consequent need of a saving interest in Christ. From Mr. Bredin she received a note of admission into the Society, and he seemed specially interested in her spiritual welfare and mental

improvement. He had a choice collection of books, which were prized as his greatest earthly treasure, and it was no small proof of regard that he offered this young lady their unrestricted use.*

About this period one of the preachers was one day travelling from Armagh to Coleraine. Having crossed Ballinderry bridge he entered the county of Derry, and going up the hill to where the road is bounded by the church-yard wall, he disposed of his horse for the time, and commenced to sing. Soon a number of people from the village of Churchhill collected around him, and for the first time in this parish Christ was preached by a Methodist itinerant. Having concluded the service, the evangelist offered to preach there again in six weeks, if any person would provide a place for the purpose, which some one proposed to do. Mr. and Mrs. Averell, of Ballinderry, had been standing on the outskirts of the congregation, and as the people dispersed Mrs. Averell said to her husband: "There is no person attending to the stranger. You had better ask him to come in and take some refreshment." This was accordingly done, and the servant of God was further invited in coming again to stop at their house. From that time forward preaching was regularly established at Churchhill. Some time after a local preacher from Ballycastle visited the place, and his labours were greatly owned of God. He preached with power from Revelation iii. 20, and then announced for a meeting at which he would read the rules of the Society. Having explained the nature and design of class-meeting, he invited those who desired "to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins" to give him their names. Several were then enrolled, and of these Mr. Averell's daughter Sarah, subsequently Mrs. Shillington, was the first. The class formed at this time is still in existence, and in the intervening period many have gone from it to various parts of the Lord's vineyard, irrespective of the numbers who have been removed to the Church triumphant.†

During the spring of this year Adam Clarke was offered a situation by Mr. Bennett, a respectable linen merchant in

* *Irish Evangelist*, 1860, p. 98.

† *Memorials of T. A. Shillington*, pp. 44, 45.

Coleraine, which, with the consent of his parents, he accepted ; and thus was placed in circumstances specially favourable to his growth in grace. He had the opportunity of sitting under a most instructive and powerful ministry several times in the week, and conversing with deeply religious and intelligent people. The preaching service at five o'clock in the morning he found particularly profitable. He met also with some valuable friends in that excellent Society, amongst whom was Mr. R. Douthett, from whose conversation and almost parental tenderness he reaped the highest profit. Andrew and William Hunter cared much for his soul, and watched over him for good. He had also a useful companion in John M'Kenny, whose son became a devoted and successful missionary. Indeed the whole of the Society seemed to take a deep interest in his welfare, and endeavoured to promote it, believing that God had called him to do an important work in the Church. Miss Young, afterwards Mrs. Rutherford, by sending him suitable books, also rendered him much help. Adam Clarke and John M'Kenny were class mates : and on one occasion at least walked together to Ballymena, nearly thirty miles, to attend a quarterly meeting.* Young Clarke also was encouraged to engage in Christian work, and thus led to give exhortations at different places through the country, even then giving promise of his subsequent power and success as a public speaker.

At this time also, the Rev. E. Smyth, came to Dublin, where he remained for the following eighteen months, but does not appear to have been as extensively useful as formerly, there being but few traces now of his work.

At the following Conference the name of Mr. John Crook stands in the Minutes, with that of Mr. Pilmoor, for the metropolis ; but he did not fill this appointment, being required elsewhere by Mr. Wesley.†

Mr. Zechariah Yewdall was appointed to Waterford with Mr. Lindsay. He was a pious Yorkshire man, who entered the itinerancy in 1779 : and says he found on the circuit a lively people, the labours of his predecessors, Messrs. Payne and Barber having been much blessed. But in some parts the

* *Irish Evangelist*, 1860, p. 92.

† *Methodist Magazine*, Dublin, 1808, p. 147.

new preachers had much cause for discouragement, as many backsliders, by their disorderly conduct, brought reproach on the Society, and proved a stumblingblock to others. Several, however, were convinced of the evil of their course, and sought the Lord diligently until He restored unto them the joy of His salvation.* Evidently the preachers had trouble also about the chapel in Kilkenny, which some parties threatened to sell, on account of a debt that remained on it. Mr. Lindsay wrote on the subject to Mr. Wesley, who in reply said that if the property had not actually been made over to these parties, they could not sell it, that he was himself two hundred pounds in debt, but should anyone leave him a legacy it would be reserved for Kilkenny, and if he found a suitable preacher that could be spared he would send him to them.†

Mr. Myles was stationed in Belfast, where he says, although Mr. John Watson was appointed, he had no one to help him until Christmas; and that with daily travelling and constant work in regulating Societies, he had little time for reading. However, the Lord was with him, the Society prospered, and he spent the year with great satisfaction.

Messrs. Rutherford and Moore were appointed to the Lisburn circuit, where many persons were truly devoted, the people in general walked in the fear of the Lord, and the services were well attended. The spirit of Mr. Moore was stirred up within him at one of the annual Roman Catholic celebrations in Downpatrick, when he saw the infatuated multitude who loitered about the town when mass was over. He went out to the walks near the cathedral, and standing on an eminence gave out a hymn. Immediately the people flocked together from all directions, and he cried aloud—"He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God," contrasting the service to which they were subject with the requirements of God, and they heard with earnest attention to the close.‡ It is to be hoped that the seed sown that day in the Master's name brought forth fruit to the glory of Him who has said—"My word shall not return unto Me void."

* *Arminian Magazine*, 1795, p. 270.

† *Irish Evangelist*, 1874, p. 125.

‡ *Life of the Rev. H. Moore*, pp. 72, 73.

Chapter XXXIII.

1782.

THE year 1782 opened well. On January 19th Wesley wrote to Miss Ritchie that he had very pleasing accounts from the brethren in various parts of England and Ireland, and of the abundant blessings which many received at the time of renewing their covenant with God. They thus realized foretastes of richer blessings yet to be obtained.*

At this period two young men named Nathaniel and Samuel Alcorn, who resided at Loughmuck, near Omagh, became members of the Society. Nathaniel having been convinced of sin as he listened to a member of the Society singing some hymn, subsequently while praying in a field realized peace and joy in believing. He then naturally identified himself with those who had been instrumental in leading him to decision for God. Many efforts were made to detach him from the people of his choice, but without success. He was soon appointed a leader, and after his marriage he invited to his house the messengers of salvation, who continued for nearly sixty years to preach the Gospel there, and scores of sinners were thus led to the Saviour. Samuel Alcorn entered the itinerancy in 1792. To mental gifts of a high order he added a popular address, fluency of speech, and an excellent voice for singing.

Evidently at about this time the incident occurred referred to in the following unique narrative: In 1837 a Christian lady visited Bushmills, where she one day met a stranger whose appearance greatly impressed her. He was above the middle height, overtopping most of his compeers, yet proportionately strong and muscular. His hair was grey, but the frosts of time had not untwined the curly bunches which in youth adorned what phrenologists would call a strongly marked forehead. After the usual first subjects on such occasions had been

* Wesley's Works, XIII, p. 62.

discussed, the lady ventured to allude to religious influence, and found he was no stranger to it. "My name," said he, "is John M'Conaghy. I hae twa dochters, an' had ance three as bonny boys as ever the sun shined on, but heaven tuck a fancy to them a'; ane by ane they drappit aff, till last Easter Sunday I buried the last o' them. A bright fellow he was; just five an' twenty years of age. An' he never married, but stuck by me an' the bit o' land I hae, and weel he kept me an' weel wad, had he been spared langer; but it's a' ower noo, an' we maun be content. I'm mair than fifty years amang the Methodists, the suldest ane o' them in these parts, an' I wish to tell ye hoo I cam' to be ane at a'. They had what we ca' tent meetings, an' had sic a meetin' in our kintra. I went to it, no' for loo o' my Maker, nor of the meetin', but for the loo o' as braw a lassie as ever lived, whose hoose was hard by where the preaching held. I loosed her dearly, an' I maun tell ye she was aye in my head the time o' the sermon. When it was o'er up comes Adam Clarke, an' he says, 'Don't gang to the public-house noo to drink, but gang hame.' An' he tuck me by the hand an' he says, 'Promise me you won't gang there, but you will gang hame an' pray.' It was sair wark this; my bit o' a sweetheart wad expect me, and I tried to pull aff, but I cudna do it, an' I got sae frightened aboot death an' judgment an' sich like things, that I fairly set aff hame, cried to the Lord for mercy, got a wee pickle o' religious comfort, an' hae some o' it till the present."* "A word spoken in due season, how good it is!"

Mr. J. Bredin was then on the Londonderry circuit, to supply the place of one of the preachers, and he, believing that Adam Clarke was called of God to the work of the ministry, not only lent him books and directed his studies, but also invited him to Derry and persuaded him at New Buildings to enter upon his work as a preacher of the Gospel. Mr. Bredin then wrote concerning him to Mr. Wesley who offered to receive him into the Kingswood school, that he might be better fitted for his life work. Thus Providence opened up his path to the Wesleyan itinerancy, and Ireland gave to Methodism one

* *Memorials of a Consecrated Life*, pp. 233-34.

of the most illustrious of commentators and powerful of preachers.

Towards the close of Mr. Pilmoor's second year in Dublin, Walter Griffith and a few of the most zealous young men in the Society agreed to meet together to pray for the revival of God's work every Sunday morning at five o'clock, and three days of the week at eight o'clock. The youthful band was soon joined by some of the leaders, and meetings were opened in the Infirmary, Channel row, and many other places in the city and its vicinity. Thus commenced prayer meetings in the metropolis, which subsequently were made with the Divine blessing means of everlasting good to thousands of immortal souls.*

Meantime the Rev. E. Smyth, who was stationed in Dublin, took lodgings at Killiney early in summer and began to hold meetings there, with tokens of the Lord's blessing. On June the 18th Mrs. Smyth writes—"I trust it was not in vain Mr. Smyth was sent into these parts, as there is already a noise and a shaking among the dry bones. We have a little congregation morning and evening on the Lord's day, and a prayer meeting every other day. Last Sunday an old woman cried aloud for mercy. A gauger's wife also and her daughter are seeking the Lord earnestly, and intend to join the Society on their return to Dublin."†

Mr. Wesley fully purposed up to May the 1st to visit Ireland this year,‡ but for some reason not given, changed his intention, and sent as his deputy the Rev. Dr. Coke, an honoured name, ever after dear to Ireland. This was the commencement of a new era in the history of Irish Methodism. Dr. Coke was directed to convene the Irish preachers, and to hold for the first time a regularly constituted Conference, similar to those held in England. During the visits of Mr. Wesley he had in almost if not every instance called together the preachers labouring in Ireland, and consulted with them as to the work in this country; but these occasional meetings did not control the affairs of the Society. No official record was

* *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1827, p. 75.

† *The Religion of the Heart Delineated*, p. 256.

‡ *Wesley's Works*, XIII, p. 12.

published or apparently ever made of the proceedings, and at best nothing further was done than to receive reports and make suggestions to the British Conference. But now the preachers in Ireland had become so numerous, and the business had obtained an extent and gravity which rendered it expedient that the Irish ministers should receive a corporate status of their own, and hence the appointment of Dr. Coke.

These subsequent annual Conferences were for many years held in Whitefriar street chapel. The preachers generally rode to Dublin, and on arriving there was no small stir and much brotherly kindness, after a year's labours and dangers, and never were the messengers of the churches more heartily welcomed and entertained than by the Dublin Methodists. During the sessions of the Conference there was preaching each morning at five o'clock and at six, the President took the chair and opened the meeting with devotional exercises. Breakfast was at nine and dinner at four o'clock. The usual questions as to candidates, deaths, character, stations, membership and subscriptions were put and answered by those present. At the close the brethren hastened away to their respective appointments, travelling in little companies by stages, at which they preached, and were hospitably entertained by the people.

This year the Conference met at the end of June, or early in July, but the Minutes have not been preserved. A brief record, however, was made by Mr. Myles, who was present, and having travelled five years was received into full connexion. He was the first thus accepted in Ireland, and received the usual mark of acknowledgment, the Large Minutes, with a suitable inscription, signed by the President. The number of circuits was only one more than at the previous Conference in 1778; but the membership had increased from five thousand three hundred and thirty-six to six thousand five hundred and twelve, or an addition of near twelve hundred. At the close of the Conference Dr. Coke read the minutes and enforced on the preachers the necessity of maintaining them, which they engaged to do; and it was agreed that thenceforward a yearly Conference should be held in Dublin.*

* *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1831, p. 298.

Dr. Coke soon became intimately acquainted with the details of Methodism on this side of the channel; and both preachers and people ever found in him not only a most uncompromising opponent to every moral or Methodistical irregularity, but also a faithful counsellor and a loving friend. They knew his worth, and to this day revere his memory.

Mr. W. M'Cornock was appointed to the Lisleen circuit. He says that in October he made a missionary tour of about one hundred and thirty miles; but the severity of the weather and the country being strange to him, he suffered much. Once he had to swim his horse over an arm of the sea. At another time, having to ride about twenty miles, he was benighted on a mountain, but providentially led by the barking of a dog to a house where he was kindly received. Here he embraced the opportunity of giving an exhortation, and uniting in prayer with the people, and had reason to believe it was not in vain.*

Mr. Burgess, who had been raised to the rank of quartermaster, was at this time in Belturbet, and found much enjoyment and profit in association with the Methodists of the town. They were few in number, he says, and mostly poor; but some of them rich in faith. Two are specially worthy of notice, John Ferguson, "an Israelite indeed," a pattern of meekness, simplicity and love, under whose roof those who "feared the Lord spoke often one to another," united in fervent supplications, and enjoyed rich tokens of the Divine favour. The principal support of Methodism in the town was Mrs. Alice Dawes, a widow of much industry and integrity of character, who gladly received the preachers, and fitted up a room on purpose for their accommodation. It was her delight to minister to the wants of the servants of God, and to them it was no small advantage to be favoured with the care, the counsels, and the prayers of such "a mother in Israel." Very soon after this a little chapel was built in this town.

Mr. Moore was appointed a second time to the Londonderry circuit, but did not remain the year there, as he had to remove to Dublin to settle some family affairs, so another preacher took his place, and he left the circuit under the care of his

* *Arminian Magazine*, 1785, pp. 188-89.

colleague, Mr. Crickett. Through his labours a young man was converted, named Blakely Dowling, who became a member of the Society, and in 1790 entered the itinerancy. He was distinguished by a steady and settled devotedness to God's service; while Christian simplicity and humility adorned his public life.

Not long after this Methodism was introduced into Walshes-town. On one occasion Mr. Barber was announced to preach there, but having been delayed longer than usual at Killyleagh, from whence he came by water, the service was commenced by Mr. David Thompson. The place was crowded to excess, and after a short time Mr. Barber arrived. When he began to preach a solemn awe rested on the people, and as he proceeded the Spirit was poured out more abundantly, until many cried aloud for mercy. The meeting continued until midnight and amongst those converted that night were two young ladies who, before the congregation, embraced each other with mutual joy.*

At Manorhamilton a valuable addition to the Society was made in Mr. John Crawford, of Deerpark. At the time of his conversion he knew nothing of Methodism, but soon after heard of a people called Swaddlers, to whom all manner of evil was ascribed, and resolved to attend one of their meetings and judge for himself. The truths of the Gospel and his own experience were so clearly and accurately described in the sermon he heard that he concluded at once that the Methodists were the people of God; and being invited to class-meeting his opinion was so confirmed he made up his mind that thenceforth this people would be his people, and their God his God. In a short time he was appointed a leader, and after seventy years' acquaintance with the doctrines and discipline of the Society, said—"I bless God for such a system, and will praise Him for it through all eternity."†

Messrs. Yewdall and Boardman were appointed to Cork. The former hastened to his circuit, and was much encouraged to find both a friendly people and large congregations. But Mr. Boardman remained at Limerick until the latter end of

* *Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1829, p. 263.

† *Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1852, pp. 95-100.

September, and then came to Cork, where he had laboured before, and was much beloved by the people. On the Sunday morning after his arrival he preached from "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." It was a very solemn meeting, and a reverential awe filled the hearts of the people. His work was almost done. After service, on his way to a friend's house for dinner, he was suddenly struck blind. Soon after he seemed to recover. Then he had a fit which deprived him of both speech and understanding; but a physician who was called in apprehended no danger, although there were symptoms of apoplexy. Being somewhat better next day, Mr. Boardman preached on that and the following evenings. His mind was calm and serene. On Friday he attended the meeting for intercession at noon, and was observed to pray with uncommon freedom and power for the success of the Gospel, and for his brethren in the ministry. After the meeting he went to a friend's house in the city; but as soon as he got there lost the power of speech, and was taken in a carriage to his own house. From that time he sank until about nine o'clock, when he expired in the arms of two of the brethren, and in the presence of many of his friends, who commended him to God with sorrowful hearts.

On receiving the sad tidings of Mr. Boardman's death, Mr. Yewdall, who was at Bandon, at once hastened to Cork, and found the whole Society plunged in the deepest sorrow. On the Lord's day he preached the funeral sermon to a crowded congregation. The remains were placed in front of the pulpit, and next morning borne to the graveyard attached to the cathedral of St. Fin Barre, by friends, singing hymns as they passed through the streets, and accompanied by a great multitude.

Mr. Yewdall wrote to Mr. Wesley about a suitable epitaph, and received the following:—

" With zeal for God, with love of souls inspired,
Nor awed by dangers, nor by labours tired,
BOARDMAN in distant worlds proclaims the Word
To multitudes, and turns them to his Lord.
But soon the bloody waste of war he mourns,
And, loyal, from rebellion's seat returns;
Nor yet at home—on eagle pinions flies,
And in a moment soars to Paradise!"*

* Wesley's Works, XIII., p. 18.

For some unknown reason this was laid aside, and on the plain slab which covers the grave was placed the following inscription :—

“ MR. RICHARD BOARDMAN,
Departed this life, October 4th, 1782.
Aetatis 44.

Beneath this stone the dust of Boardman lies ;
His pious soul has soared above the skies,
With eloquence divine he preached the Word
To multitudes, and turned them to the Lord.
His bright example strengthened what he taught,
And devils trembled when for Christ he fought.
With truth and Christian zeal he nations fired,
And all who knew him mourned when he expired.”*

Mr. Boardman's sudden death made a profound impression in the city, and many persons, who first went to the chapel to hear the funeral sermon were awakened to serious concern for their souls, and became regular hearers. Mrs. Ward, one of the leading members of the Society, in writing to Mr. Wesley, on October the 28th, says : “ God has been glorified by the death of His servant, as well as by his life. Cork has not known such a revival for many years, as is now taking place in it. The congregations on Sunday evenings are so large that they cannot find room within, and many are obliged to stand in the yard, as far as the outer gate. The word is attended with power. Many old professors, who were lukewarm and settled on their lees, are stirred up. They hunger and thirst after righteousness, and are on stretch for purity of heart. Many who formerly partook of this blessing and lost their evidence are stirred up to seek it afresh, so that they cannot rest without it. Backsliders are restored, and new members added to our number.”†

Meantime Mr. Yewdall, being left alone on the circuit, overpowered with work, wrote for assistance to Mr. Wesley, who replied saying that he knew of none whom he could send, unless Mr. Rutherford, then in Dublin, could be persuaded to give up Mr. Blair, his colleague, and take “ a poor invalid,” John Mayly, then in the city in his stead ; but this the leaders in

* The Western Pioneers, p. 188.

† *Arminian Magazine*, 1790, p. 609.

the metropolis strongly objected to, and it was not until Christmas, when Wesley had exercised his authority by insisting on it, and when probably there was a prospect of getting Mr. Moore, that the proposal was carried out.

On December the 22nd, Mrs. Ward writes again : "The mercy of God, and His care of His vineyard, has been abundantly displayed among us. Could you see the unanimity and prosperity of our little Zion, your heart would rejoice. There is a universal revival in our bands and classes. God is in the midst of us, and all feel that uniting principle of life exciting us to provoke one another to love and good works. Our congregations are large on Sundays ; and on week nights of late they are much increased and deeply serious. The select Society is again assembled. A general conviction rests on believers for holiness of heart ; some who formerly experienced it, but had lost their evidence, are again restored ; and others are brought into that rest which belongs to the people of God. Prayer meetings are in some places kept up, but not so generally as we could wish."*

Soon after Mr. Boardman was called hence to the home above, he was followed by another honoured servant of God, Mr. Swindells, whose end also was sudden. The health of this devoted evangelist had become exceedingly delicate, as he suffered for a long time from a very painful disorder, and thus was not able to do even the work then assigned to a supernumerary. Hence his name only occasionally appears on the list of stations. Yet he continued faithfully and zealously to work for God, as strength and opportunity were afforded him. His heart and flesh continued to decline for years, and his sufferings were excruciating. Still his patience was unwearied, and each interval of pain was employed in praise and heavenly conversation. About the middle of October, having returned to England, he was at Stockport. One evening he took tea at a Mr. Lavender's, in company with Miss Ritchie, Mr. Jeremiah Brettel, and others. He was cheerful and related some of the scenes, through which he had passed. Among the rest, that once near Cork he was taken by a violent mob to the bank of a river,

* *Arminian Magazine*, 1790, p. 666.

where they purposed to drown him ; but one of their number—the most resolute—said the preacher would swim out ; but he would take him to a better place. Then going a short distance, he showed him a way across a field, and protested that not a man should touch him. Having spent a pleasant evening, Mr. Swindells accompanied Mr. Brettel to the chapel, and sat with him in the pulpit during the service. He continued apparently in the same state of health for a few days, until the 21st, when as he was walking to and fro in the parlour of a Mr. Whitaker, he sank down and died. Sudden death to him no doubt was sudden glory.

Chapter XXXIV.

1783.

IN Cork the labours of Mr. Blair were accompanied with the Divine blessing in a remarkable manner, so that the good work continued to deepen and spread until within a few months nearly two hundred were added to the Society in the city.

Notwithstanding the revival in Cork, and although the chapel was crowded with hearers all through the winter, it was several months before there were any tokens of a deep work at Bandon. As some of the leaders seemed cold the preachers endeavoured to revive them by meeting them and their classes frequently, and also by preaching in the plainest and strongest manner, and their labours were not in vain. At length about sixty were added to the membership. Amongst these were fourteen young men belonging to a troop of horse then quartered in the town. A Society in London for distributing religious books amongst the military sent a number of Bibles for that purpose. On the day appointed for giving them Mr. Yewdall preached on the importance of searching the Scriptures, exhorted his hearers to carefully read and meditate on the word

of God, and had every reason to believe that the word spoken and distributed was attended with the Divine blessing to many of the soldiers in Cork and Bandon.*

The brethren on this circuit being much revived evinced their zeal by spreading the knowledge of the truth in other places. A subscription list was opened to defray any extra expenses that might be incurred. Inishannon, which appears to have been abandoned, got another trial, and Methodism was introduced to the villages of Newcestown, Castletown and Ballyneen, and a number of neighbouring farmsteads. As these places lay within a few miles of Bandon, the residents had occasional opportunities of hearing the Methodist preachers. Among the first to open their hearts to the truth and their homes to its messengers were Richard Dawson, of Moss-grove, and Benjamin Hosford, of Bengour. The latter was a Presbyterian; was trained to be a wool-comber in Bandon, where he heard Mr. Wesley preach; and while still a youth went to take charge of his father's small farm at Farranmareen, adjoining Bengour. About this time a local preacher from Bandon visited the place, and preached in the house of a weaver named Bennett, the people sitting on the looms during the service. This house is still standing. Thenceforth this was a regular appointment for the preachers, who, when they visited the place stayed alternately with Benjamin Hosford, his brother Joseph, and a man named Welply. Soon a small chapel was built at Bengour, which, in 1835 gave place to a better one erected at Rushfield, a short distance off. A daughter of Welply's had married a Mr. Anglin and these were the first to receive the preacher at Ballyneen. This is a small village in Ballymoney, one of the three parishes which were known as "the Paradise of Parsons." The fortunate incumbents, it seems, had large incomes and little to do, and so spent no small portion of their time in rounds of social festivities. Other workers however found something to do. After occasional meetings in Anglin's house, the preachers secured a large room in which to hold their services, and then came to the village once a fortnight. Many of the names of Hosford,

* *Arminian Magazine*, 1795, pp. 817-18.

Dawson, Welply, Roberts and Fuller joined the Society, and welcomed the evangelists to their homes. A member of the last named, Mrs. Elizabeth Fuller, died at Castletown, near Ballyneen, in 1867, having reached the venerable age of one hundred and two. She heard Wesley preach several times, and was the last connecting link in these parts of the Methodists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. By the death of "Old Aunt Betty," as she was popularly called, many a good story has been lost, for no one has preserved her reminiscences of early Methodism.*

In March Mr. Blair preached at Youghal, where the chief magistrate granted the use of the courthouse, and the inhabitants in general gave attention to the word : so that in a short time a Society was formed of about sixty persons, many of whom, there was good reason to believe, experienced the life and power of true religion.

At Skibbereen, where the preachers obtained the use of the town-hall, a small Society was also formed. Mr. Yewdall, a few miles from the town, met with a clergyman who was most desirous for the spiritual welfare of those under his care, invited the preachers to his parish, and procured a suitable room for the services. Many attended and good was done.†

A young lady also who five years previously had been converted at Bandon, was this year married to Captain Evans, of Ardraly, in the parish of Aghadown, and invited the preachers to her house, which became a centre of religious light in the neighbourhood. Twenty years subsequently a chapel was built here, eighteen years before one was erected in Skibbereen.‡

Mr. Yewdall visited Dunmanway, a town where they had never heard a Methodist preacher before, and he was received with open arms. The people were so eager to gratify their curiosity that "they had hardly patience to wait until he alighted from his horse," and they compelled him to remain with them four days, during which they not only received him with generous hospitality, but also received the truth in love.

* *Irish Christian Advocate*, 1883, p. 430. † *Arminian Magazine*, 1795, pp. 317-18.

‡ *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1847, p. 410.

From this time the preachers continued to visit the town regularly once a fortnight, and soon formed a Society of thirty persons, who gave satisfactory evidence of their desire to flee from the wrath to come and abandon all sin. Of those who then became Methodists, one was Mrs. Ellen Wolfe, who during the remaining sixty-three years of her protracted life adorned the doctrine of the Lord her Saviour.* Another was Mrs. Elizabeth Atkins, who through the first sermon of Mr. Blair in the town was deeply impressed, and determined to cast in her lot with the Society. This resolution she carried out when the next preacher came to the neighbourhood. During the first few visits of the itinerants they were entertained by a poor man named Patterson, who a short time previously had removed from Ballyneen, where he had heard and embraced the Gospel. But Mrs. Atkins, being in better circumstances, opened her house for the reception of the messengers of truth, and to the close of her long and exemplary life it was the home of the preachers.†

The success which attended the labours of the itinerants on this circuit in opening new places, encouraged them to attempt preaching at Bantry, where a few Protestant families resided, but the greater part of the inhabitants were Roman Catholics. Accordingly a few friends accompanied Mr. Yewdall thither, and went through the town, informing the people that there would be a service in the evening. The preacher took his stand in an open place, near the market cross, and a large congregation assembled; but as the ground happened to be the property of a gentleman who was not at home, his officious steward, under pretence that his master would be displeased, compelled them to remove to the market-place. Here the service had not proceeded far, when another interruption took place, through a sea captain engaging a man to blow a French horn; but he was prevailed upon to desist, so that the preacher concluded without further interference. Not having succeeded in obtaining lodgings in the inn, the Methodists took up their residence in a private house belonging to a Roman Catholic, who treated them with the greatest civility. At six o'clock next

* *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1847, p. 620. † *Ibid*, 1840, p. 255.

morning Mr. Yewdall preached again before the door of his host to a quiet congregation, many of whom were Romanists, and behaved far better than those called Protestants. At the end of a fortnight the zealous itinerant returned to the town, and found that during his absence the priest had been very energetic in his attempts to excite the people to commence a riot, if the Methodists should venture to preach there again, threatened any that dare to attend with excommunication, and procured a poor half-witted fellow to harangue the people in the street, as a counter attraction. Seeing that it would be dangerous to preach out of doors, Mr. Yewdall obtained the use of a large diningroom in the inn, which was filled with an attentive audience. The priest came in, intending to make disturbance, but the gentlemen present would not suffer him. Next morning the congregation was increasingly attentive, and Mr. Yewdall was enabled to speak with much liberty.*

While thus the work was gloriously prospering in the south, in the extreme north it seemed to languish. Hence, on February the 10th Mr. Moore having removed to Dublin, Mr. Wesley wrote to Mr. Crickett, who had charge of the Londonderry circuit, as follows :—"Many years ago, the Society at Barnard Castle, as large as that at Derry, was remarkably dead. When Samuel Meggot, now with God, came to them, he advised them to keep a day of fasting and prayer. A flame broke out, and spread through all the circuit; nor is it extinguished to this day. I advise you to do the same at Derry. On Sunday evening reprove strongly their unfaithfulness and unfruitfulness: and desire all that fear God to humble themselves with fasting on the Friday following. I am much inclined to hope a flame will break out in Londonderry likewise. But you must immediately resume the form at least of a Methodist Society. I positively forbid you or any preacher to be a leader; rather put the most insignificant person in each class to be the leader of it, and try if you cannot persuade three men, if no more, and three women, to meet in band. Hope to the end. You shall see better days. The plainer you speak the more good you will do. Derry will bear plain dealing."†

* *Arminian Magazine*, 1795, pp. 818-19. † Wesley's Works, XIV., p. 861.

How far Mr. Crickett attended to these instructions, or with what results, does not appear.

Soon after writing the above Mr. Wesley left London for Ireland, intending to make his usual tour; but was attacked in Bristol with the disease which brought him so near death in 1775. This so weakened him that he could only visit Dublin, where he arrived on April the 13th, and was the guest of Mr. H. Brooke.

On April the 29th the Conference began, and continued until May the 2nd. "All was peace and love." "We had an exceedingly happy Conference," writes Wesley. "I wish all our English preachers were of the same spirit with the Irish, among whom there is no jarring string. I never saw such simplicity and teachableness run through a body of preachers before."*

On the following Sunday evening the Society met to renew their covenant with God, and to receive the Lord's supper; the Saviour was graciously present, and manifested Himself in power to many.† Mr. Moore says that he had the great privilege of hearing Mr. Wesley preach almost every day, and learned more concerning the apostolic direction about "rightly dividing the word of truth" than in all his previous studies.‡

While in the city Wesley seized the opportunity of waiting on Lady Arabella Denny at her beautiful residence, now known as Lisaniskea, Blackrock. The philanthropic character of this noble lady is well known. In 1765 she was presented with the freedom of the city of Dublin as a mark of esteem "for her ladyship, for her many great charities and constant care of the poor foundling children in the city workhouse." She also founded the Magdalene Asylum in Leeson street, which was opened in 1766, and was the first institution of the kind in Ireland. Her ladyship died in 1792, aged eighty-five years.

Wesley being unable to make his usual tour, embarked for Holyhead on May the 8th, having remained about three weeks in Ireland, and delegated to Dr. Coke the work of visiting the Societies.

* Wesley's Works, XII, p. 151. † Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, 1851, p. 527.

‡ Life of the Rev. H. Moore, p. 76.

No details have been published of the doctor's excursion. Doubtless it was then, as he journeyed through the country, he first met our friend Bartley Campbell, who became at once a great favourite with the worthy doctor, heralding him from place to place, and with amazing success collecting the people to hear him preach.

For some time the leading Methodists in Dublin were most wishful that the Rev. J. W. and Mrs. Fletcher should visit the city, and in April, 1782, sent a request earnestly urging them to do so. But on account of the delicate state of Mr. Fletcher's health, his long absence from his parish, and his curate being at Kingswood, he was compelled to decline going just then. The friends in Dublin, however, availed themselves of the presence of Dr. Coke to send with him this year a renewal of the invitation, and Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher judged it improper any longer to withhold consent, lest, in disregarding the solicitations of a willing people, they should disobey the summons of God. So they accepted the invitation, and in August, 1783, arrived in Dublin, where they continued for about six weeks.

Application was made to the rector of St. Andrew's to allow Mr. Fletcher to preach in his church, which was immediately granted. The house was crowded to excess, and the earnestness and power of the preacher astonished the congregation, some of whom seemed to doubt if he were not more than human. But, alas! when it became known that he preached on the evening of the same day in the Methodist chapel, the pulpits of the churches, with the exception of that of the French church, were immediately closed against him. Notwithstanding, however, the intolerant spirit thus manifested, Mr. Fletcher's labours were wonderfully owned of God.

The expectations in regard to this period, though high, were more than realized: for a more blessed and fruitful visit has scarcely ever been made by a Christian minister to a Christian Church since the days of the apostles. Mr. Fletcher's public and private ministrations were attended with marvellous power, numbers of careless persons were awakened, and desire for the blessing of holiness was excited and intensified in professing Christians.

Amongst the many who during this visit were either converted or awakened to a concern for their souls that resulted in their conversion, were Michael Murphy, who entered the itinerancy in 1788, James Stuart, who began to travel in 1792, and Miss Sarah Moore, afterwards wife of Mr. Myles.

Mr. Fletcher frequently preached in the French church to the descendants of the Huguenots, who had sought in this country an asylum from the sword of persecution. Amongst his auditors on these occasions were sometimes many persons who did not understand a sentence of what he spoke, as he preached in French, and on being asked their reason for attending the services, replied, "We went to look at him, for heaven seemed to beam from his countenance."

While in Dublin, Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher were entertained by Mr. and Mrs. Smyth, and under their hospitable roof had the opportunity of meeting with many truly pious persons of different religious denominations. These social gatherings—or "drawing-room meetings," as they are now designated—proved means of rich spiritual blessing, and initiated a series of reunions probably unsurpassed in their power for good in the history of Methodism.

It should also be recorded that Mr. Fletcher established the prayer and class meetings on Tuesdays and Thursdays at eleven o'clock, held on the lobby of Whitefriar street chapel, for the convenience of delicate and aged females, not able to go out in the evenings: and it was often remarked what special blessing attended these meetings.*

During the latter part of the visit of Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher the devoted Lady Mary Fitzgerald was also the guest of Mrs. Smyth, with whom she cultivated the closest intimacy and friendship, until severed by death. Her ladyship's stay in Ireland was not of long continuance, and she returned to England with Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher and Mrs. Smyth. She was a woman of deep piety and singular devotedness to God. Her unhappy marriage with George Fitzgerald, Esq., of Turrough park, County Mayo, proved the fruitful source of many

* Smith's History of Methodism in Ireland, p. 195.

of those afflictions which she was called to endure in the early part of her life.

When Mr. Fletcher was about to leave, knowing the scanty pittance he received from his parish, it was thought but an act of common honesty to refund him the expense he had been at in coming to Ireland, and to bear his charges back again to Madeley. Accordingly on the last evening of his visit the stewards and trustees united to press his acceptance of a small purse, not as a present, but as a debt justly due. But he firmly and absolutely refused it. At length, they being very urgent with him, he took the purse in his hand and said—"Must I accept it? and may I do what I please with it?" "Yes, yes," all replied. "God be praised, then!" said he, raising his eyes towards heaven. "What a mercy is here! I heard some of you complaining that your Poor's Fund was never so low before; take this purse, God has sent it to you, and bestowed it upon your poor. You cannot deny me; it is sacred to them. God be praised! I heartily thank you, my dear, kind brethren."

Mrs. Fletcher expressed her deep conviction—"a faith riveted in her heart"—that before long there would be a great revival of the work of God in Dublin. These expectations were fully realized, and a large addition to the Society took place, as it gradually and steadily increased from about five hundred members to upwards of one thousand.

While Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher were in the metropolis, the Rev. J. Creighton, with his family, arrived there *en route* to London. Having been invited by Mr. Wesley to join him, he had resigned his curacy, and was appointed to officiate in City road chapel, as one of the resident clergymen.*

At the Irish Conference Messrs. Moore, Blair and Yewdall were stationed in Cork; but the British Conference appointed Mr. Lawrence Kane to take the place of Mr. Yewdall, who returned to England. Mr. Moore says that his reception on the circuit was very encouraging, and a door of usefulness was opened. The Lord greatly blessed the preaching of the word, and a considerable number of the members were led to seek the full salvation of God.

* *Arminian Magazine*, 1785, p. 402.

At Dunmanway there was a good prospect. A large room, which had been used as a workshop, was secured, and was well filled; a considerable number, also, had been received into the Society, who seemed desirous to experience all the blessings of the Gospel. Here the following remarkable incident occurred: The town was on the property of Sir Richard E. Cox, Bart., a young man of most profligate habits. He was much displeased at the moral change which had taken place in the inhabitants, and with the preachers, who in his opinion had caused it: and had frequently threatened to stop their proceedings. A good man observed—"He may certainly do so, if the Lord permit, for no man can resist him; he is greater in Dunmanway than King George himself." This wild youth at length resolved that he would throw the preacher who next came to the town into the lake in front of his own residence. But when the time of Mr. Moore's going there arrived, the Lord had most awfully thwarted the execution of this wicked purpose. Living by himself, and being at a loss for a pastime on the Lord's day, Sir Richard determined to have an excursion on the lake. One of the oars of his boat, however, had been broken, and to supply its place timber was procured, and a piece sawn from it in the churchyard during divine service. He embarked with a young gentleman, one of his companions, and having sailed for a little while, said he would see in how short a time the rowers could make the circuit of the lake. They then struck off, and he remained, with watch in hand, for some time observing them; but the slowness of the motion annoyed him, and after many oaths and imprecations, he pulled one of the men from the bench and took his place, saying he would show them how to row. He dipped too deeply in the water, and making a violent pull, the new made oar snapped like a twig, and he was precipitated backward into the lake. Though upwards of three hundred people soon collected on the shore, and every effort was made to save him, it was in vain. The body was recovered next day, much swollen and disfigured, a short time before Mr. Moore entered the town.* The

* Life of the Rev. H. Moore, pp. 78, 79.

Methodists saw in the untimely fate of the young Baronet a signal mark of the displeasure of Providence. "If Sir Richard had not taken out his boat," they said, "and made arrangements to drown one of the preachers, he would not have been drowned himself." "It was because he laid his horsewhip across the shoulders of a priest," said the Roman Catholics. "No," replied the Episcopalians, "it was because the oar which he used was made on Sunday, and from a branch cut off one of the venerable elms in the church-yard."* The appalling accident, however, was overruled for good, as all opposition to the truth ended, and the word of the Lord had free course and was glorified.

The remainder of the year, says Mr. Moore, was one of the happiest he ever experienced, believers were built up in their most holy faith, while his labours and those of his colleagues were much owned of the Lord in the salvation of souls. The itinerants made excursions into the surrounding country, and preached in new places wherever opportunity opened. Thus on one occasion Mr. Moore visited Cappoquin. Having heard that there was a detachment of dragoons there, in which was a Methodist class, he wrote to the quartermaster, who was a member of the Society, and informed him of his intention. Accordingly he was met about a quarter of a mile from his destination by a friend sent to conduct him. "I am afraid," said the stranger, "you will not be able to do any good in the town, the people are mostly Catholics and very wicked, and the Protestants are little better." "Are they worse than dead in sin?" inquired Mr. Moore, and then added, "If they are no worse we know One that can undertake for that." His companion brightened up, and having seen the preacher safe in his quarters, cheerfully left to publish through the town the service in the evening, when a large congregation assembled, most of whom were Romanists. The commanding officer also and all the soldiers, not on duty, attended. Mr. Moore preached again on the following morning, and announced that he would return to the town on a certain day.

* *Irish Christian Advocate*, 1888, p. 359.

When the time came he was met by his former guide, who with a rather discontented air accosted him thus—"O, Mr. Moore, I have bad news for you. The priest has been here, and when he heard of you he preached for the first time these twelve months, and warned all his people not to hear you." Mr. Moore, being curious to know something more about the sermon, his friend said—"He took for his text Revelation xx. 7, "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations;" and addressed his audience thus: 'O you brute beasts, you ought to be the greatest people in the world, as you are the only Church: and yet you are nothing but beasts. You think the Church knows nothing of these men who are going about preaching, because you do not know them. But you see, here they are. The Church knows all about them. I will read the passage again to you.' So he did, and then continued, 'Now you beasts, who are running after these servants of the devil, when I come here again I shall know how to deal with you. I will put out the candle upon every one of you.'" After this luminous exhortation it might be expected that there would have been but few with courage sufficient to resist the *brutum fulmen*, yet notwithstanding the threats, the congregation was good, and much spiritual power was realized.*

Some time during this year a young man named Meade Leahy joined the Society at Kinsale, of which he continued a consistent and useful member for nearly fifty years. His natural disposition was warm, and his manner considered by some eccentric; but sanctified by Divine grace, these helped to make him an efficient and active leader. His house was ever open for the messengers of mercy, and there they found a comfortable home. It was his custom to go to the preaching-house an hour previous to the beginning of the service, and spend the intervening time in communion with God.†

Another event which occurred at this period is worthy of notice. Mr. Thomas Gilpin, who had resided in England, and been converted through the ministry of Mr. Wesley, came with

* Life of the Rev. H. Moore, pp. 78-80.

† Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, 1883, p. 411.

his family to Tullyroan. He was a pious and zealous local preacher, and as his residence was but a mile from Derryscollop, he found in this village ample opportunity for usefulness. He established regular Sunday preaching there, and also travelled much through the surrounding country, where his labours were greatly blessed. In this work he was assisted by his sons, Thomas and William.* Mr. Gilpin caught the disease, which terminated his life, by preaching a funeral sermon in the open air with his uncovered head exposed to the cold and rain. While on his deathbed, knowing that his end was approaching, he said to his son William—"I bequeath to you the care of the people among whom I have been labouring. Be faithful, and strive to promote their salvation." Again, addressing all his children, he said—"I have endeavoured to instruct you in religion by precept and example, and am now going to my Father's kingdom; if you all be faithful to death, I shall meet you with joy at the right hand of God; but if not, I shall see you on the left, and seeing you there shall give me no pain, for where I am going pain can never enter." His last words were—"My Father, my Father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof.†

The Methodists of Ireland have been identified with the foreign missionary operations of the Society from their commencement, contributing liberally their worldly substance, and giving their sons and daughters to carry on the sacred work. By a remarkable Providence this country had the privilege of co-operating in the first mission formed by the Society, that in the West Indies, long before any Wesleyan missionary had arrived there. At this time a venerable man lived in Waterford, a member of the Society, who was too far advanced in life to engage in business, and was with his wife supported by two sons, whom, with the rest of his children, he had brought up in the fear of the Lord. Some persons persuaded these young men, that if they went to America they would certainly make their fortune. From this they became restless, and this year induced their parents to accompany them to the

* His son William entered the itinerancy in England in 1779.

† *Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1849, pp. 31, 32.

New World. As their means were very limited, the two young men entered into an engagement with the captain of a schooner bound for Virginia, by which they empowered him to sell their services for such a period as would be sufficient to indemnify him for their passage, and that of their parents. When they were about to embark, another of the old man's sons came to take a last farewell, but was so affected at the thought of seeing them no more, that he also bound himself as his brothers had done: so they all bade adieu to their native land together.

The captain was a most inhuman and wicked man. No sooner were the poor people at sea than they were treated like slaves, and obliged to submit to hardships unknown to the lowest sailors. Their voyage was long and stormy; and this, in addition to the indignities to which the emigrants were obliged to submit, rendered their situation deplorable in the extreme. When they drew near the destined port, a violent storm arose, which carried away one of the masts, and eventually drove them to the West Indies. Having sprung a leak, they drifted, a floating wreck, into a harbour in Antigua, after having been at sea thirteen weeks. The vessel remained for repair; the poor passengers went on shore, and the old man having learned that there were Methodists in the island, enquired for the preaching-house; and there he found real and active friends, who, as soon as they knew the circumstances of the case, immediately ransomed the whole family. The three brothers were provided with good situations, and the father, having gifts as well as grace, was employed in instructing the negroes and holding meetings.* Under the superintendence of Mr. Baxter, with the assistance of Mrs. Gilbert, and the subordinate instrumentality of the old Irish emigrant, the cause prospered; so that there were under their care at this time upwards of one thousand members. Three years later, in 1786, when Dr. Coke first visited the island, he found as the result of the Divine blessing on their united labours nearly two thousand members in Society.

As a young Englishman named Robert Blake, who had entered the itinerancy in 1778, and was appointed to Limerick

* *Arminian Magazine*, 1791, pp. 499-501.

at the Conference of 1782, left his circuit three times without the consent of the Assistant, and “stupidly and saucily affronted almost all the leaders,”* Matthias Joyce was sent by Mr. Wesley to supply his place. Mr. Joyce says that during the short time he travelled the circuit he had severe trials, but the Lord comforted him in the midst of all.

At the Conference this year he was stationed at Ballyconnell with Messrs. R. Armstrong and J. Kerr; but the numerous privations and discouragements in connection with the work so affected him that he resolved to return home. So he saddled his horse and rode away from one of his appointments, but with such a sense of guilt, that he feared each moment he would fall and break his neck, and when met and reasoned with by several members of the Society, was prevailed upon to resume his labours. His wife also, as a true helpmate, wrote to encourage him to persevere in the Lord's work. She said—“Are you afraid of the devil, who is himself held in chains by your Master?” Is not God on your side? Then fear not. This temptation is for the trial of your faith. The Lord will make your cup to overflow after it, and bless you in His own way.† Thus an eminently devoted and useful servant of God was saved to the Connexion. On this circuit towards the close of the year a blessed revival commenced in the neighbourhood of Aghalun. One Sunday morning in November as one of the leaders, James Shearman, narrated his experience in class, a man present, Thomas Berney, was deeply impressed, and from that time several sought for redemption in the blood of Christ. At the love-feast on the 28th Berney expressed his determination to serve God before all, and fervently desired an interest in their prayers; and on the following Sunday was filled with peace and joy unspeakable. A profound impression was then made on the minds of many, which proved the beginning of a glorious and long continued revival movement, during which large numbers were led to decide for God.‡ Thus “the wilderness became a fruitful field, and the fruitful field was counted for a forest.”

* Wealey's Works, XIII, p. 14.

† Lives of Early Methodist Preachers, IV, 264-68.

‡ *Arminian Magazine*, 1786, pp. 54, 55.

Chapter XXXV.

1784.

THE good work in Fermanagh referred to at the close of the last chapter continued to deepen and spread during the whole of the year 1784. Numerous openings were obtained for preaching the glorious Gospel, the services were largely attended, and at nearly every meeting there were persons convinced of sin or converted to God. On some occasions such was the distress of the people that the preacher was unable to proceed with his sermon, and had recourse to prayer. Amongst those converted were some of the Irvines, Beattys, Dunbars, Mitchells, Halls, Johnstons, Grahams, Littles and Armstrongs, families long identified with Methodism in this district of country, and in America.*

A few local preachers, led by Messrs. William Armstrong and George Henderson, of Drumbulcan, formed a plan to carry on the work on the northern part of the Enniskillen circuit, by which means access was obtained to numerous places and families where Methodism had not been known before. It was no uncommon thing for these zealous brethren to travel twenty or thirty miles to preach, and in many instances openings were thus made for those who had entered the itinerancy. In connection with this special effort Robert Crozier, of Trory, was led to religious decision, and soon began to work for Christ, giving indications of those talents which when cultivated proved him to be one of the remarkable men of his day.† With an unattractive countenance he had a mind of great excellence, keen, analytic and transparent.

In January the Methodist Missionary Society was formed in London, and from the first report issued this year it appears that the income amounted to £66 3s, including £14 14s subscribed in Dublin.‡ Mrs. Kirchhoffer (misspelled Kirkover), £2

* *Arminian Magazine*, 1786, pp. 55, 56.

† Unpublished Gleanings of Methodism in Fermanagh.

‡ Tyerman's Wesley, III., pp. 480-81.

2s; Mr. Henry Brooke, £2 2s; Master and Miss Blatchford, £4 4s; Mr. D'Olier, £2 2s; Mrs. Smyth, £2 2s; and Mrs. King, £2 2s.

In Cork the good work continued to prosper greatly. Thus on April the 17th Mrs. Ward writes—"I have not in the twenty-one years that I have been in Society seen such times; our people have the power and life of religion increasing daily among them; their only contention is to provoke each other to love and good works. The fire not only spreads from heart to heart, but Cork and the county of Cork are growing almost too small for it; five new places have been visited. The people here receive the word gladly, and there is a prospect of much good being done among them. They are growing in grace and in the knowledge of God in the country Societies, as well as in number. Much of this great good is owing to those servants of God who labour among us. No time, no weather makes any interruption in their plan: their labours are abundant, and the blessing on them as great. They love and prefer each the other to himself, while their ministry, instead of growing stale, increases daily in power and usefulness. Do not think I exaggerate. I speak rather short of the truth; I am not partial to any man; but God continues to bless their united labours, and the work spreads and deepens in their hands."*

At Waterford a young man named John Langley was convinced of sin through a sermon preached by Mr. J. Price, became a member of the Society, and gave himself unreservedly to the Lord. Soon afterwards he removed to London, became connected with City road chapel, and there as a leader and also a visiter of the Strangers' Friend Society, did a good work for Christ. He died in great peace in 1814, and his remains were interred in the graveyard at City road.†

During the spring Dr. Coke paid his third visit to Ireland;‡ but as usual few details are available. He was in Dublin at the end of April, and wrote that he had met the classes, and had no doubt but there was a considerable revival in the Society.

* *Arminian Magazine*, 1791, pp. 553-54.

† *Methodist Magazine*, London, 1814, pp. 335-36.

‡ Tyerman's *Life of Fletcher*, p. 540.

One of Mrs. King's classes, especially, afforded evidence of it, more than any class he had ever met.*

He also visited and had a large congregation in Prosperous, a small town in the county of Kildare, founded in 1775 by a younger brother of Mr. Henry Brooke, of Dublin. Here Captain Brooke established a cotton factory, in which about two thousand operatives were employed; amongst whom he invited the Methodist preachers to labour, and afforded them every facility for regularly preaching. As the majority of the workers were Romanists, he also provided a room for the priest to celebrate mass in, on condition that he should neither say or do anything to prevent his people from attending the Methodist services, which was readily promised. In carrying on this vast undertaking Captain Brooke soon exceeded the limits of his own means, and, on application to Parliament for assistance, received a loan of £25,000 for twelve years, without interest; but in 1786, having again occasion to apply for help, either in the shape of a fresh loan or an extension of time, his petition was rejected, and the works consequently were discontinued, thus throwing more than fourteen hundred looms idle. On the failure of his fortune in Ireland, Captain Brooke was in 1788 appointed Governor of St. Helena, and shortly after raised to the rank of colonel. In recognition of his important services here he received the thanks of the King and Government through Mr. Dundas, and was presented by Marquess Wellesley, Governor of India, in full assembly, with a diamond-hilted sword.

But to return to Dr. Coke. He was evidently much concerned about the appointment of the Assistant in Dublin for the ensuing year, and hence wrote to Mr. Wesley for his advice, as follows: "I really do not know one preacher in Ireland, of those who are to remain, who appears to me to be every way qualified to be Assistant of the Dublin circuit. I sincerely wish you would send one from England; but he should be a thorough Methodist. What do you think of James Rogers? If you would make him a promise that he shall return to England, after two years in Dublin, I think he will

* Etheridge's Life of Dr. Coke, p. 79.

come ; and Andrew Blair can fill his place for a month or three weeks, while he steps over the channel and marries Miss Roe. Henry Moore would do, but London is of still more importance ; and our Cork friends would be angry if he was removed to any other place in Ireland.”*

The Conference met on July the 6th, with Dr. Coke for its president. Five preachers were received on trial, including Walter Griffith, James M'Donald, and William Hammet ; and the increase of membership reported was three hundred and seventy-four.

A few months previous to the Conference Mr. Wesley had executed and enrolled in Chancery a Deed of Declaration, which has ever since been regarded as the Magna Charta of Methodism. The nature of this document must now be considered.

In the Large Minutes of 1763 it was enjoined that every chapel should be settled according to a certain form given, to the effect that the trustees for the time being should permit Wesley himself, and such other persons as he might appoint, to have the free use of the premises, to preach there God's Holy Word. In case of his death the same right was secured to his brother Charles, and on his decease to the Rev. W. Grimshaw. After the death of these three clergymen, the chapels were to be held in trust for the sole use of such persons as might be appointed to them at the yearly Conference of the people called Methodists, provided that they preached no other doctrines than those contained in Wesley's Notes on the New Testament and his four volumes of Sermons.

As yet, however, there was no legal definition of what was meant by the terms “Conference of the people called Methodists,” and to supply this defect, by declaring what persons were members of the Conference, and how the succession and identity of it were to be continued, Wesley in February, 1784, executed his famous Deed of Declaration, which a few days afterwards was enrolled in the High Court of Chancery.

This document states that the Conference had always consisted of Methodist preachers, whom Wesley had annually

* Etheridge's Life of Dr. Coke, p. 80.

invited to meet him for the following purposes : to advise with him for the promotion of the Gospel of Christ ; to appoint preachers and exhorters in connexion with him to the use of chapels ; to expel unworthy preachers : and to admit others on probation.

The deed then gives the names and addresses of one hundred preachers, who were declared to be the members of the Conference, and proceeds to state :—They were to assemble yearly at London, Bristol, or any other place which they might think proper : and their first business was to fill up all vacancies occasioned by death or other circumstances. No act was to be valid unless forty members were present. The Conference should not continue less than five days, or more than three weeks. They were to elect a president and a secretary from their own number. Any member absenting himself from two successive annual assemblies without leave, and not appearing on the first day of the third, forfeited his position. The Conference had power to admit preachers on trial, to receive them into full connexion, and for sufficient cause to expel them. The members should not appoint any person to preach in their chapels who was not either one of their number, admitted into connexion with them, or received on trial ; nor appoint any preacher, except ordained ministers of the Church of England for more than three years successively to one place. They might send one or more members of their body as delegates to Ireland, or anywhere else out of Great Britain, to act on their behalf, and with all the powers they possessed. Whenever the Conference should be reduced below the number of forty members, and continue so for three years, or whenever the members should decline or neglect to meet for three successive years, the Conference should be extinguished, and all its powers, privileges and advantages should cease.

The hundred preachers appointed by Mr. Wesley included the following eleven then stationed in Ireland—Messrs. Rutherford, Jackson, Henry Moore, Blair, Watkinson, N. Price, Lindsay, G. Brown, Barber, Foster and Crook ; and three Irishmen who had appointments in England—Messrs. Creighton, Myles and Thompson, not to mention Mr. Wright, who, though a Scotchman, was one of the fruits of Irish

Methodism. Many of the preachers in England, who were not included in the hundred selected, were greatly offended, and some in consequence withdrew from the Connexion; but in Ireland and among the Irish preachers no such feeling appears to have existed. That the Deed Poll was cordially accepted is evident from the following important resolution which passed the Conference this year—"Whereas, a deed poll has been lately enrolled in his Majesty's High Court of Chancery in London by the Rev. John Wesley, for the specification and establishment of the Conference of the people called Methodists; and whereas, an anonymous appeal has been circulated among the Societies with the design of depreciating and destroying the force of the said deed; we, the preachers in Conference assembled, do testify that we do approve of the said deed, do prefer it to the former plan of government set forth in the Large Minutes of Conference, and are willing to submit to its regulations and to support it, and that we also do condemn the said anonymous appeal as false and inflammatory."*

The proposal of Dr. Coke with regard to the metropolis evidently met with the approval of Wesley, as it was carried out by the appointment of Messrs. Rogers and Blair, an arrangement which was signally owned of the Lord. On August the 19th Mr. Rogers was married to the saintly Hester Anne Roe, and soon after, with his bride, hastened to Dublin. Here they were cordially welcomed by the people, and were not many days in the city before they were fully satisfied that their coming was of the Lord. They found a people fully prepared to receive the Gospel of peace. Within six weeks several found mercy, and publicly returned thanks to Almighty God for a sense of His pardoning love, and many more were awakened.†

In the meantime Mrs. King was married to Mr. J. Johnson, of Lisburn, and thus Mrs. Rogers arrived just in time to take her place and follow up her work. The hopes of all were encouraged to expect a glorious revival, for which a general

* Minutes of the Irish Conference, I. p. 27.

† Lives of Early Methodist Preachers, IV. pp. 815-16.

Spirit of supplication was given; and God answered in a wonderful manner. As it was manifestly a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, it was thought expedient at the love-feast on October the 13th to give notes of admittance to many who were not members, so that nearly seven hundred were present: and a feast of love it was, such as many will praise God for to all eternity. After several had spoken with great freedom and simplicity, a poor penitent with tears besought the people to pray for her. The kindlings of love which had been felt before then became a flame: the power of God descended of a truth, and in every part of the house were heard cries for mercy or songs of praise. Not one remained unaffected, at least seven were justified, and several who had come with only a faint desire after God were deeply convinced of sin. Next night others were pardoned, amongst whom was "dear sister Rudd," a poor nervous woman, who had been a seeker for twenty-one years, but now obtained "the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins." A young man also who had indulged himself in all kinds of sins with greediness, and, according to his own expression, "believed no God more supreme than himself," strayed into the chapel just as Mr. Rogers announced his text—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shall be saved"—was pricked in his heart, and led to cry for mercy. On another occasion a man and his wife came to the service who had been anxious inquirers seven years, and were both set at liberty in the same instant, and rejoiced together with exceeding great joy. Another person who had been a backslider ten years, and fell first into Antinomian principles, and then into gross sin, got into despair, and many times attempted to put an end to his life, but was prevented by an overruling Providence. On November the 12th, having pointed a loaded pistol at his own breast, intending to discharge it, the inquiry came with power to his heart, "Why will ye die?" He instantly dropped the weapon, fell on his knees, and afterwards came to the preachers, who encouraged him to look to Jesus. On the Tuesday following, at the prayer-meeting he obtained some hope, and that night under Mr. Blair's preaching was set at liberty, which he told with unspeakable gratitude.

On November the 18th there was in Gravel walk chapel another love-feast, which proved a more wonderful season than even the previous one. Nine at least were justified, and many lukewarm professors greatly revived. This glorious work continued to deepen and spread. Amongst others converted was a Jew, who from being according to his sect a Pharisee, became zealous in his love for Jesus, though at the risk of life, for his own mother and other relatives attempted to murder him.* In answer to earnest prayer, through the instrumentality of this devoted son of Abraham, his sister was led to believe in the despised Nazarene, and became a living and dying witness of His power to save. On her death-bed, her mother having sent a message to the effect that if she renounced Christ, she would receive her and be as kind to her as ever, the young Jewess, true to her Christian profession, replied: "No, I will never renounce Christ, I would not for a thousand worlds. I never knew happiness until I knew Him. He is my Lord, my God, and my Saviour, and I am going to be happy with Him for ever," and in holy triumph her ransomed spirit entered into the new Jerusalem.†

On Christmas morning the chapel in Whitefriar street was well-filled at four o'clock. The people continued during preaching, exhortation, and prayer until eight. "It was a memorable season, and the power of God was manifest to the whole congregation."‡

Amongst the many who at this period were converted in the metropolis, and subsequently occupied influential positions in the Society, were Messrs. Roger Lamb,|| George Gallagher,§ William Curry,¶ and John Parkington.** To these should be added the name of another, Thomas Holy, Esq., of Sheffield. During a visit to Dublin this year, one of the devoted women of the Society, Mrs. Ayckbown, was so owned in leading him to the exercise of saving faith, that he subsequently gratefully subscribed himself as her son in the Gospel.††

* Experience of Mrs. H. A. Rogers, pp. 133-36. † *Arminian Magazine*, 1788, pp. 461-65. ‡ Lives of early Methodist Preachers, IV., p. 318. || *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1831, p. 729. § *Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1844, p. 76. ¶ Ibid., 1843, p. 99. ** *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1824, p. 214. †† *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1832, p. 4.

A free school for forty boys was also opened, and for seven years was conducted on the lobby of Whitefriar street chapel. The first master was Mr. Richard Condy, who had entered the itinerancy in 1776, and was held in high esteem by Mr. Wesley; but subsequently was compelled to retire for a time on account of his health.

But to pass from the metropolis and take a brief glance at the work in the provinces. The appointment of the Assistant on the Cork circuit this year was left by the Irish Conference in the hands of their English brethren, who sent Christopher Peacock, a native of Yorkshire, who had been converted through the preaching of Mr. Rogers, and in 1781 was received on trial. He is described as "a precious devoted labourer, highly favoured of God and man." He and his colleague, Mr. Thomas Davis, followed strictly in the lines of their excellent predecessors, and by continuing the same plan both of doctrine and discipline greatly furthered the work. Nearly one hundred were added to the Society, and many truly converted.*

The charge of the Limerick circuit was given to Mr. John Leech, a native of Lancashire, who began to travel in 1773, and now for the first time visited Ireland. Here he found an intelligent loving people, who received him with affection, and showed him much kindness. He gave himself up to God and His work, determined to do all the good he could, and had the satisfaction of seeing that his labours were not in vain in the Lord.† One of those converted through his ministry was Mr. Thomas Gloster, who became a member of the Society, and after a long mental struggle was filled with peace and joy in believing. For nearly sixty years he walked with God, and his whole spirit and deportment evinced the character of a genuine disciple. For forty-two years he sustained the office of a leader, fulfilling its duties with zeal and fidelity.‡ Some men of influence in the city joined the Society, while a good work was carried on in the country, where the Societies and congregations had been small.

* *Arminian Magazine*, 1786, p. 600.

† *Methodist Magazine*, Dublin, 1812, p. 386.

‡ *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1843, p. 611.

Up to this period no permanent Society had been formed in the town of Wexford; but in September Mr. Deaves came to reside there, and at once requested Mr. Tattershall, the Assistant on the Waterford circuit, to visit the neighbourhood, which he did, and formed a class of ten members. The second name enrolled was that of Mr. William Gurley, who was asked the following questions: "What are your motives for uniting with the Methodist Society? Do you believe in the forgiveness of sins, and the witness of the Holy Spirit? Do you believe in a further state of grace to be attained in this life? Do you believe it possible to continue in that state of holiness? Do you believe it possible to fall from that state?"* Little probably did the preacher think that the new member he then received into the Society would in the course of time be amongst the first to plant the Cross in the wilds of a western state, and that he would live to proclaim to thousands in the new world the blessed truths he had heard from the Irish itinerants. Yet so it proved.

The appointments to Charlemont were J. Crook, J. Mayly, and W. Griffith, who had a most prosperous year. The circuit then embraced the whole of the county Armagh, and a large part of Tyrone, requiring the preachers six weeks to go the round, though seldom remaining more than one night in any place.† Of Mr. Crook it is said, "the hand of the Lord was with him, and many believed and turned to the Lord."

The reception of Mr. Griffith was not very encouraging. On arriving at his first appointment his host accosted him with, "Who sent you here?" but added, "Since you are come, we will not turn you out." At this and at several other places which the young preacher visited that week, he found small congregations, dull societies, and very poor accommodation. On the following Sunday he went to Armagh, and on speaking of his intention to preach in the open air, the steward of the Society warmly opposed it. Mr. Griffith produced the Large Minutes, and read the regulation respecting preaching out of doors; but the official argued that on that day especially it would be improper, as several corps of volunteers were in town,

* Memoir of the Rev. W. Gurley, pp. 81, 82.

† *Irish Evangelist*, 1860, p. 78.

that Lord Charlemont was expected every moment, and that the whole place was in great confusion. All these reasons, however, had no weight with Mr. Griffith, and so as soon as the cathedral service was over, he took his stand on the steps of the market-house and preached to a great multitude. All the men of the Society were of the same mind as the steward, and therefore did not attend; but the women with more courage and zeal, stood nobly by their preacher, and the Lord so helped him that he felt encouraged to continue such efforts for doing good.

At this time the Society and congregation in Newry were very small, and the services were held in a wretched and obscure garret. On Mr. Griffith's second visit to the town he proposed to preach here also in the open air; but was strongly opposed by the wife of the Society steward, who told him that he ought to be thankful that he had the garret to preach in; that better preachers than he had occupied it; and added with due emphasis, "If Mr. Wesley had sent us preachers fit to preach in the street, we should have had no objection!" This, however, did not prevent the devoted evangelist from going to the market-house, where he addressed a considerable congregation. So long as the weather permitted services were conducted out of doors, and the fruit was apparent in a large increase to the congregation and Society.* During this year no less than two hundred and fifty-nine members were added to the Society on this circuit.

There were tokens of prosperity also in many other parts of Ireland. Some years previously a young man named Joseph Prosser was converted in Limerick, became a Methodist, and for more than forty years adorned his Christian profession. Early in life he settled in Tipperary, soon after which he and another Christian friend applied to Mr. Wesley for a preacher to visit the town, and thus a Society was formed there. Mr. Prosser during this year was enabled to carry out a resolution he had long formed, of erecting a house for the worship of God. This he did on his own property, and entirely at his own expense, and thus proved a means of much blessing in the neighbourhood.†

* *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1827, pp., 78, 79.

† *Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1828, pp. 367-69.

It was at this period that Methodism was introduced into Westport, where a young lady, who subsequently became Mrs. Laurence, and her father's family, were among the first that received the glad tidings of salvation, and became members of the Society. Mrs. Laurence continued a steady and consistent follower of the Lord Jesus until the end of life, being a period of fifty-six years.*

A Society was also formed at Letterkenny, where a Miss Mary Brown resided, who in 1779 was married to Mr. James Elliott. At this time she was visited with a severe affliction, which proved the means of bringing her to an experimental knowledge of the truth; and thus she was one of the first in the town whose names were enrolled as members. On the evening on which the preacher formed the class, he was much surprised and cheered to hear her give a clear account of her conversion; and her subsequent consistent life attested the truth and reality of the profession she made.†

In addition to these encouraging openings for preaching the truth and new Societies that were formed, there were one or two interesting and remarkable conversions that should be noticed. Thus, one Sunday afternoon during the year a respectable young man in passing through the main street of Downpatrick observed a crowd of people standing round a preacher. Some were laughing, some talking, and others listening attentively. The preacher was Mr. George Brown, and the youth was James M'Kee Byron. The latter joined the congregation, listened with respectful attention, was deeply convinced of the error of his way, and determined to yield himself up to God. On the following Sabbath he heard Mr. W. Hammett deliver a powerful discourse on the Prodigal Son, in which he drew so correct a picture of young Byron's former life, that he concluded the preacher must have had some previous knowledge respecting him. After the public service the members of the Society and any seriously disposed persons being invited to remain, the anxious inquirer thankfully embraced the opportunity, and found this meeting even more

* *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1840, p. 502.

† *Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1827, pp. 355-58.

profitable than that which had preceded it. He was led to realize the love of God in Christ Jesus to sinners ; and from that time resolved, " this people shall be my people, and their God shall be my God." He accompanied the preachers to their country appointments, and on one occasion, at a love-feast at Strangford, the Lord manifested Himself to him so powerfully that he was constrained to break out in fervent praise. Soon after he spoke of Christ to his father, and urged on him the duty of family prayer, which had previously been neglected. The parent consented if the son would conduct it, which he gladly did ; the Lord heard prayer, and both father and mother were soon converted, joined the Society, and continued until death to adorn their religious profession. Mr. Byron began to exhort at prayer meetings, and at length to preach.* He was summoned by Mr. Wesley to enter the itinerancy, and travelled in England for thirty-eight years with general acceptance and considerable success.

In Wexford a young man named Ramsey was under sentence of execution. He was the son of respectable parents, and heir to considerable property ; but being over-indulged in childhood, contracted an ungovernable temper, which, as he grew older, broke out into various excesses, such as drinking, swearing, gambling and the like, until at last he became a highway robber, was seized by the authorities and condemned to death. He was then visited by Mr. Tattershall, the Assistant on the Waterford circuit, to whom at first he appeared very hardened ; but on his second visit the wretched culprit wept bitterly. Subsequently the Romanists perplexed him greatly, striving to induce him to receive a priest, and thus obtain a full absolution. Special prayer was offered for him by all the Societies on the circuit, and not in vain. When Mr. Tattershall visited him in order to sit up with him during his last night on earth, it appeared that two days previously while some of the local brethren were singing the hymn beginning—" O Thou that hearest when sinners cry," he obtained peace with God, and said he was satisfied to die and go to his Saviour. From this time he gave clear and satisfactory evidence of the reality

* *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1829, pp. 577-78.

of his conversion, rejoiced in the Lord his Saviour, and his last testimony produced a most profound and, it is to be hoped, lasting impression.*

Chapter XXXVII.

1785.

ON the first Sunday in 1785 the Society in Dublin, with several other friends, met to renew their covenant with God, and it proved a most solemn season. Mr. Rogers says that he seldom remembered to have felt more of the Divine presence than at this time. Five were reconciled to God by faith in the blood of Christ, and on the Thursday and Friday evenings following, while the nature of the covenant was further explained, others stepped into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Thus the good work continued to extend and prosper.†

Nor was there any abatement in the blessed revival in Fermanagh. For months very few days elapsed without one or more finding peace with God. On February the 6th, although the snow on the ground was deep, a large congregation assembled, and one young woman who had forded a river, stood, wet as she was, all the time of the service, weeping bitterly, until the Lord refreshed her soul with His heavenly benediction. On Thursday the 24th three souls were set at liberty. The case of one of these was peculiar. A few weeks before she had so violently opposed her husband joining the Society as even to strike him. He did not retaliate, but immediately advertised all he had for sale. She was then much frightened, asked his pardon, and promised never more to oppose his going where he

* *Arminian Magazine*, 1786, pp. 495-90.

† *Lives of Early Methodist Preachers* IV., p. 318.

thought right; but he said "Nay, you must go with me and hear for yourself," which she did, and soon after gave her heart to God. On April the 17th Messrs. Hetherington and Mitchell, after they had preached at Kilmore, held a love-feast, at which it pleased God to display His saving power in a wonderful manner. On the 24th as Mr. Mitchell conducted a service the people were so deeply affected that they could not sing, but bitterly wept. Many were convinced of sin, and some obtained the pardoning mercy of God. On June the 13th there was a love-feast, from the beginning of which many testified freely to what the Lord had done for their souls, amongst whom was a boy eight years old, as well as several other children. At length recourse was made to prayer, and the Lord poured out His Holy Spirit abundantly. Those who had not decided for God began to weep and some to cry aloud for mercy. The preachers were obliged to separate and go from one place to another to exhort and comfort the mourners, and thus there was prayer in four or five different parts of the house at the same time. About twenty-five or thirty obtained a sense of sins forgiven, and very many were convinced of the remains of sin, and led to seek earnestly entire sanctification. On Saturday the 18th a field meeting was held near Belleek by Messrs. Barber, Joseph Armstrong, and Mitchell, when the Spirit of the Lord descended in a gracious manner. There was a shaking among the dry bones, so that many were convinced of their guilt, and others of their need of purity of heart.*

On April the 11th Mr. Wesley, accompanied by Mr. Whitfield, arrived in Dublin, where he found "such a resting-place at our own house" as he had never found in Ireland before, and two such preachers with two such wives as he knew not where to find again. But what specially gladdened his heart was the evidence of spiritual prosperity. The morning congregations were at least one-third larger than when he was formerly in the city, and those on the week evenings as numerous as those that had been wont to assemble on the Sundays. On examining the Society he says he never found it in such a state before. The number of members was

* *Arminian Magazine*, 1786, pp. 260-63.

seven hundred, about two hundred of whom had been added during the previous few months. Many of these he believed loved God with all their hearts, and their number increased daily. At the various services "the overwhelming power of saving grace" was realized. The number of children converted was remarkable. Thirteen or fourteen girls in one class rejoiced in God their Saviour, and were "as serious and staid in their whole behaviour as if they were thirty or forty years old." At St. Patrick's there was such a number of communicants as had scarcely ever been seen there before.

Having spent a week in Dublin Wesley set out for the provinces. At Prosperous, where he preached in a very large room, there was not nearly sufficient accommodation for the congregation. Here a Society of about fifty members had been formed. At Edenderry the audience was uncommonly large and attentive. At Tyrrell's Pass he found a small society, all that remained of a once numerous and devoted people. At Coolalough, or more correctly Brackagh Castle, the new residence to which the Handys had removed, alas! the cause had undergone a similar reverse, while Mr. S. Handy had passed to the home above six years previously. But at Athlone the scene was entirely changed; for many years there had not been so much life in the Society, many of the old dead members were revived, many were added to their number, and harmony and love prevailed. At Ballinasloe he preached in the open air to a numerous congregation of Catholics and Protestants, who were equally attentive. As he entered Aughrim, the rector, who was waiting at his gate to welcome the venerable evangelist, desired him to use his house both then and whenever he pleased, so he preached there in the evening, and it was thoroughly filled; but the Society was "well nigh shrunk into nothing," which he traced to "the baneful influence of riches." At Eyrecourt also the minister gave him the use of his church, but the people seemed to understand little of religion.

As Wesley had not the privilege of using the church at Birr, where he was the guest of Mr. Marshall, he stood in the square, and the audience was exceedingly large, but many of them were "wild as untamed colts." He was in hope that the work would revive in this town, more especially as the Lord

had here restored one of the most eminent backsliders in the kingdom. While in Birr he administered the Lord's supper to the members of the Society.* At Tullamore, where he was the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Burgess,† he preached in the church, the soldiers with their officers attended, and the Lord was graciously present. At Portarlington, as the house could not contain a third of the hearers, Wesley removed to the market-house, where the word proved quick and powerful, and very few appeared unaffected. At Mountmellick he preached in the church to such a congregation as probably was never there before; but the majority of them seemed to care for none of those things. At Kilkenny in the evening the audience was similar to that at Mountmellick; but those who attended in the morning were of a nobler spirit, and he found uncommon liberty among them.

Wesley's visit to Waterford this year was one of the most encouraging and successful he had paid to the city. He was the guest of Mr. Deaves, and preached three times to numerous congregations in the court-house, which he speaks of as "one of the largest in the kingdom." On Sunday he went to the cathedral, "one of the most elegant churches in Ireland," where "the whole service was performed with the utmost solemnity," and at its close the senior prebendary, Dr. Fall, invited him to dinner, and requested him to stay at his house on his next visit to the city. In the afternoon the venerable evangelist preached on 1st Corinthians xiii. "at the head of the Mall to a Moorfield's congregation, all quiet and attentive." A love-feast was also held in an upper room of a private house, during which a woman burst into tears, and requested Mr. Wesley to pray for her. She and Mr. Gurley, from Wexford, then knelt down. The venerable servant of God prayed earnestly for them, and both were made happy in the love of Christ.‡ At the concluding service, early on the following morning, all the congregation "appeared to have a real concern for their salvation."

At Youghal the court-house was filled from end to end, and

* *Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1844, p. 256.

† *Memoirs of the Rev. T. Burgess*, p. 26.

‡ *Memoir of the Rev. William Gurley*, p. 84.

such was the attention of all that Wesley had hopes many would bring forth fruit to perfection. Next day he set out for Cork, and was met at Middleton by thirty equestrians,* members of the Society, led by George Howe. Accompanied by this devoted escort, the venerable evangelist rode through a well cultivated country to the city. Here he found the Society had greatly prospered, the congregations were exceedingly large, and the membership numbered four hundred. There was no disturbance now: God having made even their adversaries to be at peace with them. While in the city he appointed Andrew Laffan, George Howe and Jas. Johnson stewards.† “How,” enquires Wesley, “shall we keep up the flame that is now kindled, not only in Cork but in many parts of the nation? Not by sitting still, but by stirring up the gift of God that is in them; by uninterrupted watchfulness; by warning everyone, and exhorting everyone; and by besieging the throne with the power of prayer.”

On May the 9th, at noon, Wesley preached at Kinsale in the old bowling green. All conducted themselves with propriety but a few officers who walked up and down, and talked during the whole service. On the evening of that day he reached Bandon, and preached in the Main street to a very numerous congregation, “but some of them were better clothed than taught, for they laughed and talked a great part of the time.” At Kilfinnane, it being too stormy to preach out of doors, he occupied the assembly room.

On arriving at Limerick Wesley found that many of his old friends had been removed to the Church triumphant. On Sunday he was present at the service in the cathedral, which continued four hours, although it concluded a little sooner on account of his assistance at the Lord’s supper. In the evening he took his stand near the custom-house, where a great multitude assembled, many of whom were “Wild as the untaught Indian’s brood,” so that he deemed it advisable to remove to the chapel. Next day he re-established the select Society, which had been quite neglected. At Kilchreest he was the

* One of these, William Seymour, having been spared to the patriarchal age of ninety-seven, was gathered home so recently as 1863.

† *Irish Christian Advocate*, 1838, p. 301.

guest of Colonel Pearse, but found the society uncongenial. Next day hearing that a little girl had sat up all night, and then walked two miles to see him, he took her into his chaise, and was surprised to find that she had been two years in possession of purity of heart, and was continually rejoicing in God. Her name was Mary Brooke, and from the time of her conversion for sixty years she adorned the Gospel of Christ.*

At Ballinrobe Wesley visited the charter school; but found no master or mistress; the children were ragged and dirty, three beds had to serve for fifteen boys, and five for nineteen girls, and only five farthings a day was allowed the master for the sustenance of each of the hunger-bitten pupils. Wesley was so disgusted with the thing that he reported the case to the Commissioners in Dublin. At Castlebar, where a second chapel was built this year, he received a cordial welcome. On Sunday evening he preached to a numerous congregation, and afterwards administered the Lord's supper to the Society, two clergymen being present, one of whom enjoyed the peace of God, and the other was earnestly seeking it. At Sligo he found a sad reaction had taken place after the gracious revival with which this circuit had been visited, his congregations being by "far the worst" he had seen since he came into the country, and their behaviour exceedingly improper.

At Manorhamilton, where he was the guest of Mr. Bradham, one of the earliest and most influential Methodists in this neighbourhood,† he preached in the court-house. At Florence Court the audience was so large that he was obliged to take his stand out of doors. At Swanlinbar the service was held in the assembly room, and at its close a Mr. Pollock‡ invited the venerable evangelist to his house, where he was the means of sowing the seed of eternal life in the family, and its fruits appear to the present day.|| At Ballyconnell, where a chapel had been built two years previously, called by Wesley "our melancholy house," he preached in the church, which was very full. At Killashandra a large number of people attended, and at Kilmore, where he was the guest of Mr. R. Creighton, as no

* *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1845, p. 401. † *Ibid.*, 1833, p. 822.

‡ His nephew, William Pollock, entered the itinerancy in 1818.

|| *Irish Evangelist*, 1876, p. 90.

house there could contain half the congregation, he was obliged to preach in the open air, and “the Lord sent therewith a gracious rain on the souls of them that feared Him.” At Cavan the service was held in the ball-room ; and at Ballyhaise in the yard of the inn, where a large audience assembled.

At Clones, where he says the new preaching-house was exceedingly neat, but far too small to contain the congregation, the Society was such as he had hardly seen in Ireland, making it a point to conform to all the rules, great and small. When he preached there were about two thousand present, amongst whom was a lad named Charles Mayne, who had not previously been present at a service outside a church.* His father, a gentleman of respectability and influence, resided near Cootehill, and his eldest brother subsequently rose to be one of the judges on the Irish bench. The youth who was greatly charmed with the heavenly appearance of the preacher, which he could never afterwards forget, was induced to return to the Methodist services, and thus was led to give his heart to God. His friends alarmed at the prospect of having Methodism introduced into the family, removed him from the town, and by various tempting offers sought to dissuade him from his choice ; but in vain, for his heart was fixed.†

But to return to Wesley. He next visited Caledon, where a convenient preaching-house had recently been erected, which after the seats had been removed, just contained the congregation. The power of the Lord was unusually present, many were cut to the heart, and refused to be comforted till God spoke peace to their souls, and many more rejoiced with joy unspeakable. At Armagh no building could contain the vast audiences which assembled in Mr. M'Geough's avenue, where they crowded together regardless of wind and weather. At this period there was in the neighbourhood a great increase of the work of God, many new societies were formed, and old members quickened into spiritual life. John Noble especially entered with great zeal into the work, holding services in every place where he could get access. He was a native of the county of Donegal, had been converted about seven years, and was a

* A Mite to the Treasury, p. 4. † *Irish Evangelist*, 1861, p. 198.

man of strong intellect, uncompromising honesty and firmness, mighty in the Scriptures, and well-known for his attachment to Methodism.*

At Blackwatertown Wesley preached in Mr. Roe's yard to "a large and elegant congregation," and in the evening to one still larger at Charlemont. He then proceeded to the residence of the Rev. Charles Caulfield, the rector of Killyman, in which a numerous and deeply-affected audience assembled. Mr. Caulfield was a true Christian, and a faithful friend to Methodism. He invited the preachers to his house, and gave them all the support and encouragement in his power.†

In writing to his brother from Killyman, Wesley says—
"The patriots here are nobody. They are quite scattered, and have no design, bad or good. All is still in Ireland; only the work of God flourishes, spreading and deepening on every side."‡

At Londonderry the Society appeared better established than it had been for many years. At Coleraine there was a larger congregation than even at Clones, and the people seemed to him more intelligent than most he had met with. On the following day he preached in one of the Presbyterian meeting-houses at noon and in the evening. At Ballymoney he discoursed in the court-house to a very civil and dull auditory, and from thence went to Ballymena, where a chapel had been built four years previously. At Antrim, in the court-house, there was a large staring audience; and at Belfast, in the Linen-hall, the hearers were not only numerous but admirably behaved, which was rather a novelty to him in this town. At Downpatrick the preaching-house being too small, he repaired to the grove, where the congregation was as large as in Belfast, but much more awakened. At Ballynahinch, in the linen-hall, there was a numerous audience. At Lisburn he considered the Society the most lively he had seen for some time, owing chiefly to the good providence of God in bringing Mrs. Johnson hither. He preached in the Presbyterian meeting-house, and also in the open air to about seven or eight thousand persons. At Lurgan

* Unpublished sketch of John Noble, by James M'Keown.

† *Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1839, p. 209.

‡ Wesley's Works, XII., p. 158.

the service was held in the church-yard; and at Tanderagee, where he was the guest of Dr. Leslie, in a grove, several clergymen being amongst the auditory.

At Derryanvil, where a chapel had been built in the previous year, Wesley occupied a shady orchard, and the audience was exceedingly large, but still larger at Grange. At Richhill, where there were many backsliders, he preached from "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim!" At Newry, where he "never before had any tolerable place to preach in," the Presbyterians offered the use of their large and handsome meeting-house, which was well filled. This very year, however, a chapel was built in William street, on ground given by a Mr. Boyd, who had joined the Society, and whose consistent conduct greatly strengthened it. A few others here also were distinguished by their upright and steady walk, including Mr. Thomas Kennedy, the steward of the Society; Miss Brown, subsequently wife of Mr. J. M'Donald, and Mr. John Smith, who afterwards removed to Dublin.*

At Drogheda Wesley preached in the linen-hall to a large audience, and the Mayor and some of the aldermen saw that none made any disturbance. He then gave a short account of the rise of Methodism, which so satisfied the people that he believed there would be no more persecution of the Society in the town. On June the 18th he returned to Dublin, where he found the good cause continued to flourish. On the day following he wrote to his brother, saying: "The work of God, almost in every part of this kingdom, is in a prosperous state. Here is a set of excellent young preachers. Nine in ten of them are much devoted to God. I think, number for number, they exceed their fellow-labourers in England. Those in Dublin particularly are burning and shining lights."† And again, four days later, "Ireland is full as quiet as England; and our Societies were never so much alive as they are now."‡

The Conference met on July the 1st, when most of the preachers in Ireland were present. Four candidates were received on trial, including John Dinnen and Andrew Coleman.

* *Irish Evangelist*, 1868, p. 25.

† *Wesley's Works*, XII., p. 153.

‡ *Ibid*, p. 154.

The membership shewed an increase of one thousand three hundred and ninety. To the inquiry with regard to the Yearly Collection, how was this expended? there was given the satisfactory reply: "In supplying the deficiencies and wants of the preachers, as far as it would go." As there had been great loss through mismanagement in the sale of books, various resolutions were adopted to prevent a recurrence of this. The allowance of each preacher was fixed at £12 per annum, with eighteen-pence a week for each child. Each circuit was required to bear the expenses of its preachers to and from the Conference. Permission was also given to erect new chapels at Waterford, Londonderry, and Prosperous.* The sittings concluded on July the 6th; and Wesley says he remembered few such Conferences, either in England or Ireland, so perfectly unanimous were all the preachers, and so determined to give themselves up to God. On the 10th he set sail from Dublin, having spent three months in Ireland.

Reference has been made to the work in Newfoundland, begun by Mr. Coughlan, who, when his health failed, returned to England. For twelve years the people in that distant region were deprived of the presence and labours of a settled ministry. At length they wrote for a preacher to Mr. Wesley, and he at the British Conference, this year, appointed an Irishman, John M'Geary, as a missionary to Newfoundland. Thus Irish Methodism gave to Eastern British America, as it had done to the States, its first lay preacher and its first itinerant.

Mr. Griffith was this year appointed to Waterford by the Conference, but by Mr. Wesley's directions sent to Athlone. When he arrived in this town, he found a party in the Society violently opposed to the Assistant, Mr. Joyce: and having made himself familiar with the merits of the dispute, he conscientiously espoused the cause of his injured brother, and prudently exerted himself to support him, and to convince his opposers of the impropriety and culpability of their proceedings. In some instances he was successful, and in others his fidelity caused those who had been his friends to become his enemies; but he had the satisfaction to know that his endeavours had

* Minutes of the Irish Conference, I., pp. 27-30.

contributed to smooth the path of a worthy fellow-labourer, and to prevent mischief in the Society.*

The preachers on this circuit were favoured with a blessed revival and extension of the work of God, particularly at Longford, Cleggill, Loughan, and Killashee, in which places the Societies were awakened to deeper spiritual life, and doubled in number. At Newtownforbes, where the services were held on the Sunday afternoon, a society was formed, consisting of more than fifty members, most of whom were led into the enjoyment of the pardoning love of God. The clergyman of the parish opposed the Society, privately exerting himself to prevent the people attending the services: and when that did not succeed, declared open war from the pulpit. Mr. Griffith happened to be present when this ecclesiastic preached a sermon with the intention of exposing the alleged errors of the Methodists. In the course of this learned theological disquisition, he said that repentance was an habitual course of holiness, and that a person who continued in that course for a number of years might have some hope in the end; but for any man to profess to be awakened in a moment, and after having been for a while in distress to pretend to know his sins forgiven, was enthusiasm bordering on blasphemy! When the service concluded, Mr. Griffith was followed by nearly the whole of the congregation to the place where he preached, and took the opportunity of stating and applying the true gospel plan of salvation, temperately refuting the erroneous teaching of the sermon to which they had just listened. The minister's wife and brother were present, and doubtless informed him of what was said: for, when Mr. Griffith returned to the town, the clergyman apologized from the pulpit for his former discourse, and admitted that all he had said on that occasion might not be correct, nor would he attempt to vindicate it. From that time his opposition to Methodism ceased.†

Mr. Leech was appointed to Castlebar with Mr. John Watson. On his arrival his colleague took sick, and was unable to leave the town the whole year, therefore the labour of the circuit devolved on Mr. Leech, who exerted himself

* *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1827, p. 79.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 145-46.

greatly, and his labours were crowned with the Divine blessing. He succeeded in obtaining several new preaching places, in forming a number of Societies, and also in making such financial arrangements, that at the end of the year instead of there being a deficiency on the circuit accounts, to be paid out of the Yearly Collection, there was a surplus to give to the help of those in need.*

Mr. J. M'Donald was appointed to assist Mr. Crook on the Charlemont circuit. Here the work continued to prosper, and new Societies were formed in different places. The principal of these was Dungannon, where, although there had been preaching there for nearly twenty years, no class had been formed, and there was no place for the services except in the open air. However the itinerants continued to visit the town regularly once a fortnight, and preached in the market square. This year the Lord awakened several who were formed into a class met by Hercules Hall, of Castlecaulfield, in the house of Michael Cross, in Irish street.† Mr. Hall was an honest, simple-minded, devoted man, who not only met the class on the Sabbath mornings, but also held a weekly prayer meeting. Having to enter the town by Irish street, the wicked and ungodly shoemakers who resided in that locality, with many others who knew well the hour of his coming, prepared for his reception not only with bad words, but also with every kind of missile that came in their way. All this did not deter him from doing his duty. The members met only a short time in the house of Cross, when they removed to another, which proved equally unsuitable. It was therefore found necessary to take a place at a rent for the services, and accordingly a room was secured in the house of Dr. Temple, Market square. They had not met here, however, more than a month when the Lord was pleased to increase their number to thirty, and in the course of four months the Society was further increased to about eighty. Some of the most abandoned characters in the town were converted to God: and the enemy of souls seeing his kingdom

* *Methodist Magazine*, Dublin, 1812, p. 386.

† This first class consisted of the following members :—Richard Simmons, Geo. Appleby, Charles Chichester, Michael Cross, Prudence Cross, Hugh Brown and George Morrow.

suffer, raised a storm of persecution against the Society. The preachers were held up by the ministers of the town as false prophets, the work was grossly misrepresented, and many of the members suffered in their families. Still the work of the Lord prospered. Mr. Hall got assistance. Mr. Jonathan Turner, then of Castlecaulfield, and Mr. James Heather, then of Killyman, were also appointed to meet classes and hold public meetings in the town. Mr. Turner was a zealous local preacher, as well as a devoted and faithful leader, of great tenderness, love and sympathy. Mr. Heather belonged originally to the Society of Friends, but when the love of God was shed abroad in his heart, he laid aside to a great extent the peculiarities of that communion. He is described by Dr. Coke as “nine parts a Methodist, and one a Quaker.” He was truly devoted to God, and sustained the offices of leader and local preacher with much acceptance and success.*

In another part of this circuit, called Newtownhamilton, the preachers had the use of the Presbyterian meeting-house, with the hearty concurrence of the minister, the Rev. Mr. M'Comb, and the principal members of his congregation. “I have,” said that venerable minister, “been striving in vain for many years to do my congregation good, and if the Methodists can be of any use to them, they are welcome to the use of my house.” The Rev. Mr. Martin also, the Episcopalian minister, was very friendly, and frequently entertained the preachers. Notwithstanding this generous help, scarcely any good was done here for many years. However, the Lord so prospered the work in other parts of the circuit that at Christmas it was found necessary to get an additional preacher. Then the places on the round were so numerous that they could not be visited by each preacher more frequently than once in eight weeks; but through the judicious superintendence of Mr. Crook, each Society was properly regulated and disciplined.†

About this year the preachers first visited Banbridge. Two young women, named Walsh, who had resided in Newry and removed to this town, prevailed on John Bradford, the

* *Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1839, pp. 201-18.

† *Methodist Magazine*, Dublin, 1808, pp. 148-49.

man in whose house they lodged, to allow his stable to be used for a Methodist service, and then invited one of the preachers in Lisburn to hold a meeting. Mr. J. Kerr, the Assistant on the circuit, was the first to respond to this invitation. Amongst his hearers was a lad named John Kinnear, who accompanied his aunt. She soon after became a member of the Society, and brought her nephew to the class. The mind of the boy was thus impressed with Divine truth, so as to lead to the consecration of his life to the service of God. He became, for more than fifty years, the pillar of Methodism in this town.*

At this period the Society at Inishannon was greatly revived and increased. Amongst those added to the membership was Sylvanus Robinson, then only fourteen years of age, who used to walk to Bandon nearly every Sunday evening. In a few years he removed to this town where he entered into business, and also married Miss Lovell, a Methodist. He was then appointed a leader, several times acted as steward, and when the present chapel was built was elected a trustee. He remained a steadfast and devoted Methodist to the end of life, and was greatly beloved by all who knew him for his consistent, upright and kindly character. His children were trained up in the fear of God, and still live to revere his memory. His power in prayer at the public service was very remarkable. One of the walls of his bedroom at the spot where he used to pray, was stained with breath, so long and frequent were his private devotions. His death accorded with his life. At the age of sixty-seven he passed away, saying "Glory! Glory! Glory!"†

In November Mr. Wesley wrote to Samuel Bates, expressing his willingness to receive him into the itinerancy, and he, accepting this as an indication of the will of Providence, set out at once for the Limerick circuit, where he was cheered with manifest tokens of the Lord's blessing, more especially at Kilfinnane, Adare, and the city of Limerick. In each of these places the work of the Lord was revived, and numbers were converted, who were thus led to unite themselves with the people of God.‡

* *Irish Evangelist*, 1868, p. 148.

† *Irish Christian Advocate*, 1883, p. 801.

‡ *Methodist Magazine*, Dublin, 1806, p. 206.

Chapter XXXVIII.

1786.

IN 1784 Robert Raikes published an account of his plan for Sunday schools. This sketch arrested the attention of Mr. Wesley, who inserted the entire article in the January number of the *Arminian Magazine* for 1785, and also exhorted his people to adopt the new institution. This did much to excite an interest in regard to the work in Ireland as well as in England.

At this period a number of persons of respectability and wealth in Dublin were brought more or less under the influence of Methodism, and quickened into spiritual life. Amongst these was a young gentleman of eighteen, Arthur Guinness (father of the late Sir Benjamin Lee Guinness), to whom in part at least is to be ascribed the honour of founding the first Sunday school in our metropolis. A meeting was held in the vestry of St. Catherine's church, on 11th January, 1786, at which two clergymen and Mr. Guinness were present, when it was resolved that a school be formed and certain rules drawn out. This school was opened on the 22nd of the month, when the attendance was only six males and four females, but the numbers rapidly increased. Similar schools were soon opened in the North Strand and other portions of the city.*

Mr. Peacock had been appointed at the last Conference to labour in Dublin, and his ministry was attended with great success; but it pleased the Lord to call him hence in the midst of his usefulness, and in the full vigour of life. He finished his course with joy on February the 15th, in the thirty-fourth year of his age.

Application was at once made to Mr. Wesley to fill up the vacancy, but he was unable to do so, as all the preachers were engaged. Mr. Rogers and the Society therefore, fearing lest

* Biographic Sketches of La Touche, pp. 890-95.

the good work, which still continued, should suffer, made it a subject of special prayer, and the Lord answered them. The congregations continued very large, the prayer meetings and classes exceedingly lively, and scarcely a week passed in which some were not awakened and led to join the Society.*

In the midst of this glorious revival the Society was cheered with the presence, and blessed with the labours of the devoted Miss Ritchie, who had been strongly urged by Mr. Wesley to visit the metropolis. She says so plainly did the cloud move towards Dublin, that she never undertook a journey with stronger assurance of being in the very way wherein the Lord would have her to go. While in the city she was actively employed in Christian work, from which others as well as herself appear to have derived much benefit. Her engagements multiplied so fast that it was almost too much for her strength ; but the Lord sustained her. After a visit of three months she left, expressing great thankfulness to God, and also to her friends for their kindness.† The number of persons who were brought to a saving knowledge of God during this year in Dublin was at least one hundred and seventy-eight, and the net increase in the membership two hundred.‡

In the provinces, also, Methodism continued to extend and prosper. The 1st dragoons were at this time quartered in Nenagh. Mr. Burgess therefore invited Mr. Leech, who was in Castlebar, to come to the town, which thenceforward was regularly visited by the preachers. One of the first-fruits of the labours of the Society was the conversion of Mrs. Hardy, a cousin of George Foster, through whose influence she was led to attend the services, from which time she was a steady and consistent member of the Society. Her family also participated in the happy effects of her decision for God ; her son Joseph having been converted, became a leader, and rendered valuable aid to the cause.||

In Armagh the Society, which for nearly twenty years had

* *Lives of Early Methodist Preachers*, IV, p. 320.

† *Memoirs of Mrs. Mortimer*, p. 1,045.

‡ *Lives of Early Methodist Preachers*, IV, p. 321.

|| *Memoirs of the Rev. Jas. Burgess*, p. 27.

been bearing reproach, and struggling against most adverse circumstances, began at length to feel itself straitened for room, and able to take a step so bold and so significant as the erection of a place of worship. A suitable site was secured on the north side of Abbey street, close to the scene of Wesley's first service in the city, and a neat little preaching-house built. It was forty feet in length and twenty in breadth, and as regards comfort and accommodation was a great improvement on the little room in Thomas street, previously in use.*

Reference has already been made, in the list of preachers who came out from the Derg country, to a young man named Matthew Stewart, who was born at Drumclaph, grew up a wild and thoughtless youth, and enlisted in a regiment of dragoons. Having been led to attend some of the Methodist services, the Gospel became the power of God unto his salvation, and he began to direct others to the Saviour. In 1785 he was quartered in Athlone, where he was introduced to Mr. Wesley, and encouraged by him to persevere in his efforts to save souls. Soon after Stewart obtained his discharge, and returned to his native place.

In the meantime, however, Mr. Wesley, whose attention had long been directed to part of the county of Donegal as a sadly neglected and isolated district of country, sent this young man five guineas, and wrote to him to the following effect:—"Go to that country and see what you can do. When you have spent the enclosed, and stand in need of more, apply to your affectionate friend, J. Wesley." Receiving this as the direction of Providence, Stewart went and preached at Ardara, the Glenties, and several other places in that neighbourhood, where many of the inhabitants attended his ministry, several were converted, and Societies were formed, which continue to this day.†

When Mr. Stewart arrived at Ardara, for want of more suitable accommodation he was obliged to put up at a public house, where the parish priest and the rector happened to be at the time enjoying themselves together over their glasses. When they heard of the arrival of the stranger they at once interviewed

* *Irish Evangelist*, 1861, p. 121. † *Ibid.*, 1862, p. 234.

him, and inquired if he was a commercial traveller. He said No. They asked if he was an excise officer, to which also he answered in the negative. They said—"What are you? and what did you come here for?" He replied that he was a Methodist, and that he came to preach the Gospel. Then answered the priest—"You are not wanted here. My friend, the rector, looks after his people, I look after mine, and we get on quietly and nicely together! No one else is wanted." But Mr. Stewart expressed his determination to preach in the fair next day, which he did; and Mr. James Pearson, who resided in the town, hearing of it, invited the servant of God to his house, where from that day to the present the Methodist preachers have always had a most hearty welcome and a comfortable home.*

After Mr. Stewart had been some time in this part of the country he preached one evening at the house of a farmer, a few miles from Ardara, where a very powerful man, a Roman Catholic, frequently interrupted him, and with most awful imprecations, swore he would have the preacher's heart's blood before he crossed Bainbane mountain, knowing that Mr. Stewart had an appointment next day which rendered it necessary that he should travel in that direction. The brave evangelist rose early on the following morning, and prepared to set out on his journey. His hostess urged him to wait for breakfast, but he declined, saying: "I will eat nothing until I know what the Lord will do with me." Although there was a good road over the mountain, yet for some miles there was then no dwelling-houses. Lifting his heart to God in prayer, Mr. Stewart proceeded on his lonely way, not meeting with or seeing any person until he had passed the highest part of the mountain road, and descended on its southern side. Having travelled about a mile from the summit of the hill, he saw at some distance from him two men standing on the road, and a third lying on the ground—dead. The two men informed the preacher, that about fifteen minutes before he made his appearance they had been working at the turf, a short distance off, when the deceased came to the place. They saw him stagger and fall, and ran to his assistance, but when they reached him

* Unpublished Notes.

he was dead. "Last night," said Mr. Stewart, "that man swore with an awful imprecation he would have my heart's blood before I crossed this mountain." That evening the servant of God preached about two miles further on, and the body of the dead man was brought into the next house to that in which the service was conducted. This awful occurrence made such a profound impression on the inhabitants of the neighbourhood that the preacher met with no more persecution there. Mr. Stewart was appointed to a circuit in 1788.*

While this earnest evangelist laboured with success in the county of Donegal, Mr. Barber did a good work a little further south in the same county and in Leitrim. A considerable awakening took place, during the progress of which many were turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. Thus Mr. Barber was the means of introducing Methodism into Ballintra, Boyney, and Dartry.† Amongst the members of the first class at Ballintra were the following devoted and exemplary women: Mrs. Sarah Cockburn, Mrs. Luscinda Mowbry, Mrs. Vair, and Mrs. Thompson.‡

At Boyney, about two miles from Ballyshannon, John Bell was the first to receive the itinerants, and soon after David Thompson and his wife were made partakers of the grace of God, became members of the Society, and invited the preachers to their house. This worthy couple adorned their Christian profession, testified that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin, and at the close of life left behind them a seed to serve the Lord.

From Boyney Methodism extended to Dartry, where the preachers were received by Mr. George Curry, a son-in-law of Mr. and Mrs. Thompson. It was not without peril that he opened his house to the messengers of peace, as his ungodly neighbours resolved that the preachers should not visit that part of the country if they could prevent it. So one evening, soon after Mr. Barber arrived, tidings came that there were six or seven men coming to kill him. Mrs. Curry, in a state of

* *Irish Evangelist*, 1862, p. 234.

† *Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1840, p. 288.

‡ Her son, Mr. Wm. Thompson, entered the itinerancy in 1804.

great alarm, hastened to inform the preacher, who replied with great composure—"Don't fear, my sister, they will not hurt one hair of my head." As soon as the men entered the house Mr. Barber requested them to be seated, which they refused to do; but, being overcome by his quiet and gentle spirit, were about to leave when he said—"Let us pray." During this solemn exercise some of them knelt down, while the rest stood, and all then went peaceably away. But that night Mr. Barber's horse was dreadfully mangled, being deprived of his ears, mane and tail, and the sign of the cross cut in several parts of the body.*

Passing further south to the Athlone circuit. While Mr. Griffith preached one Sabbath morning at Cleggill, he observed in the congregation a young man weeping most bitterly, and at the close of the service sent for him. In conversation he found that he had been deeply convinced of sin through the ministry of Mr. Joyce, at Mountmellick, and for some time had been almost driven to despair; but on that morning the cloud broke and a ray of hope appeared. A few days later he obtained a clear sense of the pardon of his sins. That young man was Zechariah Worrell, who entered the itinerancy in 1796.

Mr. Griffith was also the means of leading the Rev. Adam Averell, then resident in Athlone, to see the way of God more perfectly, which proved the first step towards his entering the Methodist Connexion, in which he was for many years an esteemed and useful minister. The curate of the parish alarmed at the growing prosperity of Methodism in the town, and wishing to preserve Mr. Averell from the imputation then beginning to be cast upon him of being a Methodist, requested him to preach against this dangerous heresy; but he, very wisely, was unwilling to comply with the request without further acquaintance with the doctrines of Methodism. Just at this juncture, in the good providence of God, he made the acquaintance of Mr. Griffith, and resolved to qualify himself for the task by obtaining from him the necessary information. He therefore proposed a number of questions relating to the peculiar teaching of the Methodists, in answer to all of which Mr. Griffith took great pains to give the fullest satisfaction; and

* *Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1840, pp. 206-7.

on returning to his lodgings sent Mr. Averell a copy of Wesley's "Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion," which he read with much interest, astonishment and profit. "Are not these," thought he, "the very doctrines that our enlightened ancestors rescued from Popish error and superstition? Are they not the truths contained in the articles and liturgy of the Church? Are they not the very views that God so often gave me while upon my knees before Him?" The contemplated sermon was never preached, and Mr. Griffith was looked upon ever after as his father in the Gospel.*

During the spring Mr. Griffith visited his parents at Clogheen, and seized the opportunity of preaching there. The congregation consisted chiefly of Roman Catholics, who listened with the greatest attention; and some of them proposed that he should preach in the Catholic chapel, but this of course could not be. The priest declared war against the Methodists, but his threats did not deter the people from coming again in large numbers to hear.†

On the Charlemont circuit the blessed work continued to prosper greatly. The faithful itinerants stationed on this round preached in their turn at Portadown every second Sunday on their way from Kilmoriarty to Lurgan; and after some time were invited to the house of James Lemon, a chandler, where in spring a small class was formed, consisting of persons in very humble circumstances, whose first payment of quarterage was only five shillings and eight pence, and this sum was not exceeded for several years. The first leader was John Hamilton, who came from Newmills, near Gilford. About this time Messrs. J. Noble and J. Heather began to visit Portadown, and preached in the house of Mr. Richard Atkinson, a baker, who was friendly to Methodism, although not a member of the Society. It is also stated that meetings were held in a place which was resorted to for public amusement, known by the name of "the cockpit."‡ Such was the origin of Methodism in the town which now contains so large and influential a Society.

* Memoir of the Rev. A. Averell, pp. 21-24.

† *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1827, pp. 146-48.

‡ Memorial of T. A. Shillington, pp. 15-16.

Amongst those brought under the influence of the truth on the circuit was a young man named William Read, of Moy, who for sixty-five years sustained with great efficiency the offices of leader and local preacher, and was made the honoured instrument of much good for miles round the town in which he lived.* Another, in the neighbourhood of Dungannon, was a youth named David Stuart, who soon after went out to the island of St. Vincent, where he amassed a considerable amount of wealth. Dr. Coke makes honourable mention of Mr. Stuart's kindness towards himself and the missionaries who accompanied him to that island, and the servants of God always found a most affectionate welcome in the house of Mr. Stuart. He returned to Europe in 1797, settled in London, and identified himself with the City road Society. Having no children, he at his death in 1807 left upwards of £10,000 to Methodism—£3,200 being invested to pay the annual rent on the City road premises, and £7,000 to assist the Superannuated Preachers' Fund. Such is one of several instances of valuable financial assistance the Connexion in England derived through* Irish Methodism.

At this period the following two interesting conversions took place: Brian M'Maken acted as herd for a number of families near Newtownstewart. The itinerants were accustomed to visit this neighbourhood, and through a sermon preached by Mr. Joseph Armstrong, this poor ignorant Romanist was so deeply convinced of his sinful state that when he returned home he was unable to conceal his distress: on seeing which his wife said to him—"Brian, what ails ye? You are good for nothin'." "Molly, wisha,"† said he, "I'm afeer'd I'll lose my sowl." "Lose yer sowl, man! an' how's that? What have ye been doin'? Have ye been robbin' or murtherin' inybody? Are ye not the bist man in the counthry, and don't ye attind to all yer dues an' duties?" "Och, in throth, I think God Almighty is lookin' at me ivery minnit, an' is angry wid me." "Why, Brian, what makes ye think that?" "Bekays I'm all dirty widin." "Thin go to the priesht an' tell him all about it." The hint was promptly

* *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1853, p. 669. † My dear.

taken, and his reverence, perceiving at once how matters stood, exclaimed—"Oh, you dog, you have been to hear the Methodists; nothing better could come of it!" "'Tis thim," said Brian, "that did it on me intirely. I'll niver go near thim agin." The priest scolded him well for listening to the preaching of a heretic, and then enjoined certain severe penances. These having failed to quiet the conscience of the awakened sinner, he was ordered to go to Lough Derg, where he went through the appointed stations, walking so many times on his bare knees round a series of circles of sharp stones, and repeating certain prayers. On returning home his wife said—"Well, Brian, ye won't lose yer sowl now." "Och, dear," he replied, "I'm dirtier, an' God is angrier than iver." "Thin," said she, "go and see father Tom again." The priest told M'Maken he must try and get his spirits up: and as there was to be a dance that night he should go, and, added his reverence, "don't forget to take a drop, it will do you good." The poor man supposing that any advice from the clergy was right, went, and did take the drop—but it was a drop too much. He returned home late, and his wife was awakened by him rolling on the floor, and roaring—"I'll lose my sowl." She became alarmed and began to cry, and together they wept and prayed, as well as they knew how until morning. That day, during the time of service, Brian being led by his employment to the house where the Methodist meetings were held, notwithstanding his resolution to the contrary, approached the door to hear the singing, then waited for the prayer, and lastly ventured in. The text was—"What must I do to be saved?" and the preacher considered the state of an awakened sinner, and the advices given to relieve his distress. "Amongst the rest," remarked the servant of God, "he is told by the priest to go to Lough Derg and he will be saved." "Och, I declare," said Brian, audibly, "it's meself shure. Haven't I been there?" "Sometimes he is asked to go and drink to drive away his sorrow." "Oh! an' wasn't it only yistherday the priesht towld me to do that same, an' the devil's advice it was, too;" and there and then, before the congregation, the poor man stated the whole of what had passed between him and his clergy. The preacher told him

that he could never be happy until he was converted and obtained the forgiveness of his sins, adding, "Kneel down, and we will pray for you." The whole congregation then joined in calling upon God to have mercy upon the penitent, who, after some time, leaped up, clapped his hands, and said—"I have got it—I have got it! I know He is not angry wid me now! Oh, sir, will ye come and convert Molly?" The preacher replied, that he would go and talk with her next morning; but Brian could with difficulty wait so long. As soon as he got home, he exclaimed—"Oh, Molly, I'm all clane widin, shure I'm converted; God is not angry wid me now." "Brian, wisha," said his wife, "who converted ye?" "Oh," said he, "it was the Lord Jesus." "Would He convert me?" said she, "for I'm as bad as ye." "He would convert all the world," replied Brian. The preacher visited Molly, and explained to her the plan of salvation by Christ Jesus, and she also was soon brought to enjoy the power and comfort of religion. Brian could not rest now without telling the priest. He was advised not to go; but go he would, and in his own way told of the happiness of his soul. The priest ridiculed him, and threatened him with excommunication; to which Brian replied—"Ye may save yerself the trouble; ye could do nothin' for me in my distris, and I'll niver come near ye more." Brian and Molly suffered much from their bigoted neighbours; but held on their way, brought up their children in the fear of the Lord, and at length passed in triumph to the Paradise of God.*

Andrew Coleman, who had been appointed to the Sligo circuit, found the work arduous; but laboured to the utmost of his power. At length, however, he fell into decline, brought on, it is said, by sleeping in a damp bed. On his return home he received every attention that his friends and the Coleraine Society could render; but sank rapidly. He had the happiness of seeing his mother and grandmother brought to an acquaintance with the truth before his departure: and his last words to them, as his redeemed spirit prepared to take its flight, were

* *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1823, pp. 809-10; and *Irish Evangelist*, 1871, pp. 26, 27.

—"Follow me." The evening before he died he desired to be carried out on a chair to see the setting sun, which he beheld with pleasure until it sank beneath the horizon: when he exclaimed, "This sun has been partially obscured to me, but it shall be no more so for ever;" and about the time it re-illuminated the horizon, his happy soul soared away to regions of eternal light and glory. Mr. West preached the funeral sermon out of doors to an audience that no house could contain; and the high estimation in which the deceased was held was evinced by the many thousands who followed his remains to the grave.* His death brings to remembrance that of the youthful Spencer, thus sung by Montgomery:—

"The loveliest star of evening's train
Sets early in the western main,
And leaves the world in night;
The brightest star of morning's host,
Scarce-risen, in brighter beams is lost;
Thus sunk his form on ocean's coast,
Thus sprang his soul to light."

Mr. Wesley having arranged that either he or Dr. Coke should visit Ireland every year, the latter made an excursion through the country; but the only record of this visit to the provinces we have found, is an unimportant entry in the steward's book of the Cork circuit, dated May the 24th.† But having gone through the Societies, he returned to Dublin in time to act for the third time as President of the Conference.

The preachers met on July the 7th. No less than ten young men were admitted on trial.‡ There were two deaths; and two ceased to be recognised as Methodist preachers. One of these was the fearless and once faithful Thomas Halliday, who had fallen a victim to strong drink. His case was a sad and painful one. A complaint brought on by fatigue, exposure, and the terrible abuse he had received, drove him to stimulants for relief: and at length he became a slave to the intoxicating cup. His end should not be forgotten, and shews the depth and sincerity of his repentance. As his last moments

* *Life of Adam Clarke*, I., pp. 115-16.

† *Irish Christian Advocate*, 1883, p. 317.

‡ The name of an eleventh, D. Graham, is inserted in the Minutes of the Irish Conference, by mistake.

approached, bitterly lamenting his sin, and earnestly imploring pardon, he said, "I will die on my bended knees, calling for mercy;" and thus, in the act and attitude of an humble supplicant at the throne of grace, his spirit passed into the more immediate presence of a merciful God.

The membership reported at the Conference shewed the gratifying increase of two thousand five hundred and twenty-eight, which was spread over every circuit in the country except one. The subscriptions to the Foreign Missions—now for the first time reported to the Conference—amounted to £20 5s 6d. Mr. Wesley was earnestly requested, either himself or by his delegate, to appoint the circuit and Society stewards in the course of the annual visitation. The preachers were forbidden to become security for any chapel debts. A resolution also was passed strongly condemning various letters, some anonymous, and others signed Michael Moorhouse, which had been circulated with great diligence, to the disturbance of the Societies.*

Michael Moorhouse entered the itinerancy in 1773, and bore his share of the persecutions of his day; but became discontented, and in 1785 published a broadsheet of sixteen columns, in small type, entitled, "An Appeal to Honest Men," and full of petty grievances, particularly with regard to the influence of Messrs. Wesley and Crook, and respecting his own appointments to inferior circuits. This year he left the work, and then embodied the wailings of his Appeal in an octavo volume of 128 pages, with the title, "Defence of Mr. Michael Moorhouse, written by himself." He bitterly complains of Wesley for suffering some of the wives of preachers to dine on potatoes and buttermilk, while others were pampered with good cheer; and for allowing their husbands to wear great coats, and to use umbrellas on a rainy day. The *Monthly Review*, in noticing poor Moorhouse's notable production, quietly remarks:—"The labourer is certainly worthy of his hire, but in adjusting the hire of the labourer, a good deal must depend on the workman's skill: and if we are to judge of Master Michael Moorhouse's preaching abilities from his illiterate and silly performance, we do not see how his master could have afforded him higher

* Minutes of the Irish Conference, I., pp. 30-34.

wages : perhaps he might fare better if he were to return to his lawful occupation.”*

Owing to the Divine blessing on the influence of Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Smyth, as well as on the labours of Mr. Fletcher and others, many influential persons in the metropolis were the subject of serious impressions, for whom it was considered desirable that some church should be erected in which the Gospel would be preached. Accordingly in July, 1784, the foundation stone of the Bethesda chapel was laid. It was built at the sole expense of Mr. Smyth, who on the day previous to its dedication, accompanied by a few friends, entered and, kneeling in the centre, besought God to bless the preaching of His Word in that place. The voice of prayer was heard and answered : and in the last great day very many, no doubt, will be found who were born there. The chapel was opened according to the forms of the Episcopal Church on June 25th, 1786 ; the Rev. Edward Smyth and the Rev. William Mann being the first chaplains. Mr. Smyth added to the premises a Female Orphan School and also a Penitentiary.†

At the Irish Conference Messrs. Rutherford and Joshua Keighley were appointed to Dublin ; but at the subsequent meeting of that in London, Mr. Moore at his own desire was sent instead of Mr. Keighley.

At the British Conference three missionaries were appointed to accompany Dr. Coke to Nova Scotia, which ultimately led to the establishment of a mission in the West Indies. One of these was an Irishman, Mr. Hammett, who was stationed in St. Christopher's.

Messrs. Jonathan Brown, Joyce and Dinnen, were appointed to Cork. Mr. Brown had been eight years in the itinerancy and was a great favourite with Wesley, who had a high estimate of his suitability for the work. While on this circuit he was at one time pursued by two Popish miscreants, who had vowed to take summary vengeance on him if possible. There was no safety but in flight : and therefore, putting spurs to his horse, he urged the animal to his utmost speed. His pursuers were

* Tyerman's *Life and Times of Wesley*, III., p. 468.

† *Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon*, II., pp. 201-2.

mounted on mules, one of which was equal in power to Mr. Brown's horse ; but descending into a valley, where it is probable he would otherwise have been seized, the best mule fell, while the horse held on, and thus the rider escaped. He was ever afterwards fully persuaded that their intention was to murder him : and was often heard to relate the circumstance with gratitude to the Lord, his Preserver.*

Mr. Dinnen says that when he came to this circuit, Laurence Kane then lived at Youghal, his native place, and had been apprenticed as a ship-carpenter. He was a rigid Romanist, fond of cock-fighting and similar sports. One Sunday as Mr. Dinnen went into the court-house to preach, Kane, with some others, pelted him with snow-balls ; but afterwards went to the service, and was deeply convinced of sin. He then sold his cocks, and walked to Cork barefooted to buy a Bible. Soon after he became a member of the Society, was converted, and maintained his steadfastness, though he endured violent persecution, especially from his relatives.† In 1795 he entered the itinerancy, and travelled for eight years, when he retired, in order by keeping an academy in Cork, he might be able to support his aged parents.‡

Messrs. Leech and Griffith were stationed in Londonderry. In this city the former preached in the streets, lanes, and wherever he could get people to hear him. He had much opposition, principally from ministers among the Covenanters, who not only assailed the doctrinal teaching of Methodism, but also cast aspersions on the preachers, and especially on Mr. Wesley ; but by so doing they defeated their own design, and lost credit with their own people. Mr. Leech's labours were greatly acknowledged in the conversion of a man condemned to death, who had murdered his wife. At first the wretched criminal appeared very hardened, then became truly penitent, and at length, having abandoned all the mummeries of Popery, was enabled to rejoice in the Lord his Saviour. The servant of God who had been with him the greater part of the previous day

* *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1826, pp. 506-7

† Crook's Centenary of American Methodism, p. 66.

‡ He should not be confounded with another preacher of the same name, who began to travel in 1784.

and night, proceeded with the condemned man to the place of execution, singing a hymn. When they arrived at the awful spot Mr. Leech addressed the multitude at the request of the sheriff, sang another hymn and prayed; and as the poor criminal ascended the ladder, he held out his hand to him, saying, "I am going to die a just death for a crime I committed, but am a monument of the pardoning love of God. My soul will soon be with Jesus, and though I have dishonoured Him on earth, I shall be glorified with Him in heaven." *

Meanwhile Mr. Griffith left the Athlone circuit. On his way, as he passed through Fintona, he observed a young man who looked at him very earnestly, and at length expressed a wish to speak. Mr. Griffith took him by the hand and inquired—"Do you love Jesus Christ?" The young man burst into tears and answered—"No, sir; and I fear I never shall," adding that he was the son of a pious man, in whose house for several years there had been preaching by the Methodists, and that a little before death he had called his son to his bed side and given him the following injunctions, which he promised to observe:—1. To seek the Lord with all his heart. 2. To continue the preaching and class in his house. 3. Never to marry any but a religious woman. But he had broken his word in each of these particulars. Mr. Griffith advised him on returning home to invite the servants of God again to his house, to tell his wife with affection and firmness that he was determined at all hazards to keep his promise, to join the Society, and to begin in earnest to seek the kingdom of God; and then having commended him to God they parted. Nine months subsequently Mr. Griffith spent a night in Fintona, and rejoiced to find that the young man had strictly followed his advice, and was happy in God.

Mr. Griffith remained on the Londonderry circuit only a few weeks, and was then, by order of Mr. Wesley, removed to Coleraine, which had been formed into a separate circuit with three preachers on it. In this town he had the satisfaction to witness a considerable addition to the congregations. The Rev. Mr. Hazlett, the rector of a parish in the neighbourhood, was

* *Methodist Magazine*, Dublin, 1812, pp. 886-89.

one of his regular hearers on week nights. This clergyman declared afterwards that during the first five weeks in which he attended the ministry of Mr. Griffith he had received more evangelical instruction than in all the studies of his previous life.

The country parts of the circuit, however, were in a deplorable condition, but soon improved through the faithful labours of Mr. Griffith. The first time he visited them five or six persons found peace with God. The case of one of these especially is worthy of record. As the itinerant ascended the hill contiguous to Ballinderry he saw two respectably dressed men approaching him, and heard one of them say with much earnestness to his companion—"That is the man. Did I not describe to you his person, dress, &c., as I saw him in my dream?" He then came forward and said to the preacher—"Welcome, thou servant of the Lord. I saw thee last night in a dream, and thou art come to show me the way of salvation." The next morning when Mr. Griffith preached in his house the Lord spoke peace to his soul.*

Mr. Thomas Roberts, a native of Cornwall, who was this year received on trial, and whose name was put down to Coleraine, was sent to Londonderry instead. At St. Ives he was joined by his friend, Mr. Benjamin Pearce, who was appointed to Lisburn. On August the 27th, they landed at Dunleary, and proceeded to Dublin, where they were received by the preachers and people with Christian cordiality. Mr. Roberts, having obtained a horse and the necessary equipments, commenced his journey northward. At Armagh he was met by Mr. Gustavus Armstrong, who greatly cheered the youthful and timid preacher. Mrs. Richardson, of Charlemont, received him as an angel of God, and shewed him great hospitality. Journeying on he came to Dungannon and Cookstown, where he preached, and was favoured with the gracious presence of the Lord. At length he arrived at his destination, where he was heartily welcomed by Mr. Leech, and also by Mrs. Knox, who received him as her own son. His acquaintance with Mr. Alexander Knox proved no small advantage, as that gentleman had been

* *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1827, pp. 148-50.

favoured with a liberal education, and in addition to extensive reading, possessed a fine taste and brilliant fancy, sanctified by Divine grace. The preaching of the ministers appointed to this circuit had for some time previously been confined chiefly to the city and its vicinity; but an additional preacher was sent to enter on new work, chiefly in the north of the county of Donegal. Therefore the two devoted men on this circuit travelled through a large extent of country, from Derry across Lough Swilly to Rathmelton, Rathmullan, Letterkenny, Raphoe, Strabane, Drumquin and many intermediate places, preaching generally in private houses, but often in the open air.* Thus sinners were converted, new Societies were formed, and of many districts of the country it might be truly said, "The wilderness and the solitary place were glad, and the desert rejoiced and blossomed as the rose."

Chapter XXXVIII.

1787.

WM. M'ALLUM was born near Tanderagee in 1766. His parents were members of the Presbyterian Church, in the principles of which their children were educated. However, it pleased the Lord to bring them into connection with Methodism before the family were grown up, which proved a signal blessing. During the first six months in 1787 Mr. John Kerr was stationed on the circuit, and through his preaching William was convinced of sin, and for a season continued in a most distressing state of mind, without a sense of sins forgiven. At length, one Sunday morning in a love-feast at Derryanvil, when many were led to seek the Lord, Mr. Kerr and several others prayed earnestly for him, the Lord graciously heard and answered their united supplications, and the earnest seeker became a joyful possessor of the blessings of salvation. Soon after this he found the word of the Lord "like a fire in his

* *Life and Remains of the Rev. T. Roberts*, pp. 24-57

bones," and began to hold meetings amongst his neighbours, which proved a blessing to many. Some time subsequently he removed to Manchester, became a local preacher, and in 1797 entered upon a brief but successful course of usefulness in connection with the British Conference.*

On Good Friday, April the 6th, Mr. Wesley arrived in Dublin, when he was the guest of Mr. Arthur Keene, about half a mile out of the city—"a pleasant, healthy spot, where were peace and love, and plenty of all things." On Easter Sunday he preached in the Bethesda. "Mr. Smyth read prayers, and gave out the hymns, which were sung by fifteen or twenty fine singers, the rest of the congregation listening with as much attention and devotion as they would have done to an opera." There were between seven and eight hundred communicants, and the power of God was in the midst of them. Whitefriar street chapel was well filled in the evening, and the Divine blessing was signally manifested.

Mr. Wesley found that the Society, which consisted of more than one thousand members, continued to increase in grace as well as in numbers. Even at Gravel walk, where the congregations used to be small enough, the house was crowded, although the soldiers, seventy of whom were members of the Society, could not attend.

Having spent ten days in Dublin, Wesley set out for the provinces, accompanied by Mr. John Broadbent. At Prosperous the congregation was numerous; at Philipstown, which had been forsaken for nearly forty years, there was again a prospect of good; and at Tyrrell's Pass the chapel could not contain a fourth of the people, Protestants and Romanists, who flocked to hear.

At Keenagh he was the guest of Mr. Alexander Kingston,† a son-in-law of Mrs. Johnstone, of Lisleen. For many years the preachers here had seemed to be beating the air, but now the Lord so blessed the labours of "poor John Bredin, just tottering over the grave," that there was a lively, vigorous Society, rapidly increasing both in grace and in numbers. At

* *Methodist Magazine*, Dublin, 1811, pp. 49-53.

† *Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1865, p. 290.

Longford a large number of people assembled in the town-hall, and Wesley says he had much liberty of speech in addressing them, and seldom saw an audience more affected. At Athlone he "found a congregation of deeper experience" than any he had seen since leaving Dublin, the work of God having much increased in the town. At Ballinasloe, as the usual preaching place proved insufficient, many occupied the passage and staircase, and all within hearing distance seemed to receive the word gladly. At Aughrim the church was well filled, the Lord enabled His servant to reach the hearts of his hearers, both Roman Catholics and Protestants, and a deep and wide-spread impression seemed made in the town. Here a chapel had been built in the previous year on the property and at the sole cost of Mr. John Handy. In the church at Eyrecourt the audience was neither large or serious. At Birr, where a gracious revival had taken place, and several additions made to the Society, the congregations were increased, and they listened with much attention. At Tullamore Wesley preached in the assembly room, and on the following morning in the parlour of his host, good old Matthew Moore, whom he thought would soon join the Church above. The chapel at Portarlinton and the church were both filled with serious audiences. From thence he went to Kilkenny, where the cause had been so very low that scarcely any Society was left. Providentially, the town having been visited by some cavalry, in which were several men full of faith and love, the work of God revived and prospered, and now the preaching-house was quite filled.

Having left Mr. Kane at Kilkenny for two or three days to follow up the good work there, Wesley proceeded to Carlow, where he was the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Burgess, then quartered in the town,* and preached in the assembly room to large congregations. Soon afterwards the Society having obtained the lease of a site, erected a chapel, which with slight enlargement still stands; shewing, by the placing of all its windows in the rear, that it was built in troublous times.†

* *Memoirs of the Rev. J. Burgess*, p. 28.

† *Irish Evangelist*, 1869, p. 15.

At Newtownbarry Wesley rejoiced to meet three devoted Christian ladies, Mrs. Cookman, Mrs. Henry Moore, and Miss Acton, who had come all the way from Dublin to see him. Miss Acton, the youngest daughter of William Acton, Esq., of West Aston, County Wicklow, and niece of Sir Lawrence Parsons, of Birr Castle, was a lady of highly cultivated mind, who to the regret of her aristocratic relatives had become a Methodist. Her love and zeal for God and His cause were almost boundless, and led to such exertions of body and mind as her feeble frame was unable to bear. She had a valuable property, which, after providing herself with the mere necessities of life, was devoted to religious and charitable purposes. Her last illness was accompanied with much pain, but her happy spirit sustained by Divine grace, rose superior to physical suffering, and in 1794 she gloriously triumphed over death.*

But to return to Wesley. At Enniscorthy the use of the assembly room was granted, but a clergyman succeeded in getting the arrangement cancelled, so the venerable evangelist took his stand in a large yard, and preached there to three or four times as many as the room could have contained. At Wexford, "high and low, rich and poor, flocked" to the assembly room, and it seemed as if many of them were ripe for the Gospel. At the close of the service, as Mr. Gurley conducted him to his lodgings, a drunken Romanist came up to them with a thorny shrub in his hand, which he thrust in front of Mr. Wesley, saying, "O Sir, see what a fine smell this bush has." Mr. Gurley saw at once the malicious design, and said, "Begone! you scoundrel, or I will knock you down." The would-be assailant was alarmed, and fled. Wesley then enquired why the man had attempted to hurt him, and his companion replied, "You know the devil hates you, and so do his children."†

At Old Ross Wesley preached in the church to a large congregation of plain, country people. At Waterford he had an immense number of hearers in the court-house, while a file of musketeers, ordered by the Mayor, paraded at the door. Two

* Memoir of the Rev. A. Averell, pp. 83, 84.

† Memoir of the Rev. William Gurley, p. 87.

or three hundred people also attended at the early morning service. At Clonmel he occupied the court-house, and says he knew not when he preached to so well dressed and ill behaved a congregation. At Youghal the court-house was filled in the evening, and half full at five in the morning.

On May the 5th Wesley arrived at Cork, where he was the guest of Mr. Laffan;* and his reception was specially interesting when contrasted with the persecutions which the Methodists suffered here nearly forty years previously. The congregations were overflowing, including many of the rich and influential inhabitants, while the chief magistrate of the city, Sir Samuel Rowland, showed him marked attention. Wesley says :—"I waited by appointment on the Mayor, an upright, sensible man, who is diligently employed from morning to night in doing all the good he can. He has already prevailed upon the Corporation to make it a fixed rule, that the two hundred a-year which was spent in entertainments, should for the future be employed relieving indigent freemen, with their wives and children. He has carefully regulated the House of Industry, and has instituted a Humane Society for the relief of persons seemingly drowned. When will our English mayors copy after the Mayor of Cork?" This change of public feeling affords a striking instance of the fulfilment of the assurance, "If a man's ways please the Lord, He will make even his enemies to be at peace with him."

At Bandon, where there had been some time previously a remarkable work of God, yet not without many backsliders, Wesley preached in the assembly room on "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim!" and God applied His word. There was a general melting among the people, and many purposed to return to the Lord. At five next morning the chapel was filled, when he again applied the Word directly to backsliders, and had strong hope that "the times of refreshing" would soon "come from the presence of the Lord." So large was the congregation in the evening, that the brave old man once more took his stand in the Main street, and testified to a listening multitude, "This is not your rest." During the service, he was rudely inter-

* Wesley's Works, XIII., p. 86.

rupted in a similar way to that in which Mr. Taylor had been, by a number of trumpeters, who sounded their bugles. Wesley stopped, waited until they had done, and then resumed, when they again sounded, but getting wearied of this perpetual blowing, they rested, and the servant of God, taking advantage of the intermission, was eagerly addressing an attentive audience, when up rode the Colonel, shouting to the trumpeters with the voice of a stentor, "Blow! blow! why don't you blow?"* At the close of this service the members of Society returned to the chapel, where the Lord's supper was administered to them, and God gave them a remarkable blessing.

Calling on one that was ill at Inishannon, word was brought to Wesley that the people flocked to the room in which the services were usually held, and it was soon well filled. So at once he proceeded thither, and proclaimed to them the glad tidings of salvation. At Kinsale the service was held in the court-house, and there was a large audience. How different, he says, from that he had in the bowling-green two years previously, which was one of the most indecent, ill-mannered congregations he had ever seen in Ireland! But this was as eminently well-behaved, and included the sovereign, Mr. Haddock Chudleigh, and many persons of influence. Amongst the soldiers then quartered in the town was a sergeant, who soon after, with his regiment, was removed to Barbadoes, and here he and his pious comrades united together in Christian fellowship and work, a room for their service being supplied by a local merchant friendly to the cause. Thus a hearty welcome and a prepared field were found by Dr. Coke and the missionaries, when they first landed on the island.†

At Kilfinnane Wesley preached in the court-house to large and attentive audiences, and then went on to Limerick, where he had as usual an affectionate reception, but found much coldness in the Society, owing to a misunderstanding that had continued for several months between the preachers and some of the leading officials. This he succeeded in removing, and each time he preached had more and more

* Bennett's History of Bandon, p. 445.

† Drew's Life of Dr. Coke, pp. 193-94.

hope that God would revive His work in this city, particularly if the prayer meetings were restored. "These," said he, "are never without fruit." About three weeks later the junior preacher on the circuit, Thomas Seaward, was suddenly called to the home above. He had not completed his first year in the itinerancy, and was a young man of mental ability that promised fair to render him a special blessing to the Church and to the world.

At Kilchreest there were many at the service who were all attention except one young gentleman, but his sport was quickly spoiled, for before the sermon was half over he was as serious as his neighbours. At Ballinrobe the congregation was large and influential, and at Castlebar the service was held in the new chapel. Here also misunderstandings had arisen in the Society, which hindered the work of God, and which with the Divine blessing Wesley succeeded in removing. At Sligo he preached in the new court-house to more numerous and attentive congregations than he had seen in the town for many years. At Manorhamilton, where he was announced to preach without his concurrence, a young man was present named Charles Buckardt whose mind was seriously impressed, and became a member of the Society, which exposed him to much persecution; but nothing daunted he persevered, and for upwards of sixty years, except during illness, was seldom known to be absent from class-meeting.*

Wesley now paid his first visit to Annadale, where, in the midst of his earnest labour and wearisome journeys, he "had a day of rest, only preaching morning and evening;" and then proceeded to Ballyconnell, where he had a large audience. Leaving Mr. Broadbent to preach at Ballyhaise, he hastened to Clones to be in time for the Church service, at which there was such a number of communicants as had never been seen in the church before. Here also he succeeded in reconciling some parties that had been estranged, and in removing some offences that had crept into the Society. At Aghalun, where a chapel had been built in the previous year, he found such a large congregation as he had not seen before in the kingdom. The tent

* *Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1850, p. 818.

or covered pulpit was placed at the base of a hill, on the side of which the vast multitude sat, row above row, while cries for mercy and tears of joy rose in all directions. At Lisbellaw, where he was the guest of Mr. James Copeland who had settled in the town about nine years previously,* he preached once in the open-air and again in the assembly room, and the people appeared to be prepared to receive the fulness of the blessings of the Gospel. Here also a godly Methodist mother dedicated her child to Christ by the hands of Wesley. The name of the boy, John Nelson, evidently attracted his attention, and led him to pray that God would make him a Methodist preacher, and the request was granted.†

At Enniskillen, "formerly a den of lions," Wesley preached in the market-house, the people assembled from all sides and were all attention, the Lord made bare His arm, and the mountains flowed at His presence. Many were cut to the heart, and many rejoiced with joy unspeakable. At Sidaire also there was a very numerous audience. Here a lad named Wm. Keys, who had been converted during the recent revival in this neighbourhood, accompanied his mother to the service, and at its close the venerable evangelist laid his hands on the boy's head, and solemnly prayed that the blessing of the Triune Jehovah might rest upon him. Deeply impressed, the youth began to work for Christ, and eventually entered the itinerancy.‡

At Omagh, it being market day, a great number of people assembled, who at first were innocently noisy, but soon became still as night. At Kirlish Lodge, Wesley was heartily welcomed by Mr. and Mrs. Boyle, with whose Christian spirit he was much impressed; and, although their house was ten miles from any town, he had a large congregation, and afterwards a comfortable love-feast. Mr. Boyle having spoken to the Rev. Dr. Wilson, the rector of Ardstraw, concerning a service in his church at Newtownstewart, and he having obtained the free and full consent of the Bishop, the Hon. F.

* *Irish Evangelist*, 1862, p. 2.

† *The Memory of our Fathers*, p. 36.

‡ *Irish Evangelist*, 1863, p. 109.

A. Hervey, arrangements were accordingly made. When it was announced that Wesley would preach, it seemed as if all the people of the country round intended to go and hear. Meanwhile, however, one of the parishioners, a warm Seceder, took away the key, so the venerable evangelist preached in an adjoining orchard, and not in vain. Amongst those who were present was Miss Mary Drew, subsequently Mrs. Keys, who had previously been led to give her heart to God, through a sermon preached by Mr. Joseph Armstrong; but had not identified herself with the Methodists, owing to the ridicule to which it would expose her. The text was John iii. 16, and while listening to the sermon she resolved at once to identify herself with the people of God at any risk; and from that time until the end of her protracted life continued a steady and consistent member of the Society. *

At Kilrail, as no house could contain the audience, Wesley went out into the open air, and afterwards administered the Lord's supper to about one hundred persons. At Strabane he had no intention of preaching until he heard that the town-hall was at his service, so he went to it without delay, and found an influential and attentive audience. He then proceeded to Londonderry, where the large chapel in Magazine street having been sold to pay the heavy debt that remained on it,† and the new building in Linen-hall street not being completed, he held the service in the town-hall, where large and interesting congregations assembled. He had no intention of preaching at Newtownlimavady, but while at breakfast the people assembled in such large numbers that he could not deny them a sermon. At Coleraine he preached in the barrack yard to people of whom he speaks as "good old soldiers," steady and affectionate, with whom one would willingly have remained a little longer.

At Ballymena, where the Society was very small and poor, but well established, the Presbyterian minister having kindly offered his meeting-house, Wesley willingly accepted it, and preached to a large congregation, on many of whom the

* *Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1856, pp. 186-91.

† *Irish Evangelist*, 1862, p. 218.

Spirit descended as dew on the tender herb. At Antrim, also, the Presbyterian minister offered him the use of his large and commodious house.* Amongst those present was a Mrs. White, a pious woman who had collected all the people she could to hear the word preached, and brought her own daughter, a girl of eighteen years of age, who subsequently was converted and became a Methodist, and to the end of life had a lively recollection of the service.† At Belfast Wesley preached to numerous and seriously attentive congregations in the Linen-hall. At this period the Methodist services were usually held in the loft of a house, situated in a lane leading down to Smithfield, to reach which the members of the congregation had to ascend by a ladder.‡ But soon after he left the first chapel in this town was erected. It was in Fountain lane, at the rear of Donegal place, and was forty-six feet long, and twenty-two broad, with a gallery at the end, and could accommodate between three and four hundred people. The leading members at this period were well conducted, but not distinguished for either the ardour of their zeal or the extent of their usefulness. ||

At Lisburn, where the Presbyterian meeting-house was lent to Wesley, the congregations were the largest he had seen since leaving England. Here about three months previously good old Mrs. Cumberland had died in peace. She might well have said with aged Simeon, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word: for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." During the last two years of her life she endured much physical suffering, together with considerable anxiety as to her religious experience. Sometimes she would say, with a flood of tears, "How it will end with me, God only knows: yet He often visits my soul with His sweet influences." A few weeks before death her bodily strength was greatly reduced; but her confidence in God so increased that all the clouds of unbelief, which had so long encompassed her soul, were completely dispelled. To some who were with

* Now occupied by the Unitarians.

† *Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1849, p. 158.

‡ *Irish Christian Advocate*, 1888, p. 294. || *Irish Evangelist*, 1868, p. 26.

her she said: "I have not the shadow of a doubt, but firmly believe all will be well with me. I am quite delivered from all things, and only wait for the welcome messenger of death." At another time, to an inquiry whether she found any doubts, she answered—"A doubt? O no; not even the shadow of one." Thus this good woman, with many doubts and fears, maintained her integrity to the last, and then God lifted up the light of His countenance upon her, and gave her a clear and blessed assurance of eternal and glorious felicity.

At Downpatrick the audience was larger than at Lisburn. At Rathfryland the Presbyterian minister offered the use of his new and spacious meeting-house, which was soon filled; and at Tanderagee the congregations were even more numerous. Here Wesley was as usual the guest of Dr. Leslie, but observing that the spiritual life of his host was not as strong as it had been, with characteristic fidelity and affection he wrote to him on the subject.* This letter was doubtless received in the spirit in which it was written, as the rector's house continued to be the welcome home of Wesley. At Charlemont he preached to a large congregation assembled from all the country round, it being the day of the quarterly meeting. Immediately after the close of the public service, as usual the love-feast was held; but as the chapel could not contain the half of the people, they obtained the use of the green in the fort, and admitted the members one by one through the wicket. Here they sat down on the grass, and many no doubt turned in thought to the multitude who of old, under similar circumstances, were fed by the Saviour. Amongst those present was a lad named Thomas Wilson, who had accompanied his mother from Derryscollop: and not only did the venerable preacher, his clear voice, both in speaking and singing, his method of marking time with his hand, and his almost angelic appearance, impress the mind of the boy; but also the word preached reached his heart, and thus he was led to take the first step in what proved to be a godly and useful career.†

* A copy of this letter appears in Wesley's Works, XII., p. 867, but by some mistake is dated 1775 instead of June 16, 1787. *Vide Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1847, p. 832.

† *Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1849, p. 29.

At Dungannon the Presbyterian minister had been requested to allow Mr. Wesley to preach in his meeting-house, but he declined. So the benches were removed from the preaching room, and it contained most of the congregation. Meanwhile the work of the Lord in this town had prospered so greatly through the labours of the preachers and leaders already named, with others, such as Richard Simmons, George Appleby and George Morrow, that it had been agreed to build a chapel, and after much effort the Society had the joy of seeing the house completed, and opened for public worship at the latter end of August by Messrs. Hugh Moore and G. Armstrong. Soon afterwards Messrs. Turner and Heather came to reside in the town, and thus the local influence of the Society was much strengthened, and two additional stopping places for the preachers secured.*

At Armagh, much to the astonishment of Mr. Wesley, the Seceders freely gave him the use of their meeting-house, as the chapel could not contain half the people who desired to hear. "Surely," he remarks, "there will be a harvest here also, by-and-by, although hitherto we have seen but little fruit." These anticipations were blessedly realized, as there have been reaped in this city many glorious harvests of saved souls. At Newry he again obtained the use of the large meeting-house, and such was the impression made on the vast congregation that the new chapel could not hold the people on the next morning at five o'clock, many having to stand outside. At Dundalk, which he now visited for the first time, and Drogheda, he expected tumults, but there were none, and the congregations were large and attentive. And at Swords, notorious "from time immemorial for all manner of wickedness," there was an audience who listened to the word with deep interest.

After this most gratifying journey Wesley returned to Dublin, where a short time previously the following incident occurred:—Mr. Moore having been impressed with the feeling that much good could not be effected in the city while the preachers confined themselves to the chapels, resolved to try what could be done by preaching in the open air. Several of the principal friends strove to dissuade him, but he was not the man

* *Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1889, p. 213.

to be diverted from what he believed to be his duty. Accordingly one Sunday afternoon, accompanied by a number of members of the Society, he went to Lower Abbey street, where one of the largest chapels in the city now stands, and having mounted a chair, gave out a hymn. An immense multitude soon assembled, running from all quarters, crying out—"What is the matter?" and surrounding him and his little flock. He soon saw that most of them were Romanists; during prayer several knelt down on the stones, and having concluded with the Lord's prayer, a woman shouted—"Where is the Hail Mary?" This produced a slight sensation, which soon subsided; and when he announced his text the people listened with eager attention until another woman, with uplifted hand, cried out—"Lord have mercy on us! Christ save us! And is it come to this? I know all about him; I knew his father and his mother. O, it is well his father is dead. What would he say to this?" and then began to relate particulars. The general impression soon obtained that the preacher was beside himself, and the congregation quickly divided, part of them listening to her and part to him. Some became boisterous and strove to get near to pull him down, but the little band of Methodists continued firm, until one fellow forced his way through them, and attempted to upset the chair; but this was held fast by Mrs. Moore and a young lady, probably Miss Acton, whom the rascal dare not touch, or he would have had the whole crowd on him. Mr. Moore attempted to continue his sermon, but attention was divided, and nearly lost. After some time hard clods of dirt were thrown in all directions, accompanied by a shower of rotten eggs. Nothing, however, was permitted to touch the preacher, and he at length concluded with an appeal to his congregation, which appeared to have some effect, as he retired unmolested. Meanwhile a drunken sailor jumped on the chair and began to sing, the multitude shouted, and when the song concluded he began to preach in his way. After he had thus amused himself and his auditors for a considerable time, on attempting to pass from the quay to his ship he slipped from the plank and was drowned. The services were continued in that neighbourhood with great success.*

* Life of Rev. H. Moore, pp. 86-87.

But to return to Wesley. On examining the classes in the metropolis, and excluding one hundred and twelve members, he found one thousand one hundred and thirty-six remained. Here he had the pleasure of meeting John Howard, whom he pronounced "one of the greatest men in Europe;" adding: "Nothing but the mighty power of God could enable him to go through his difficult and dangerous employments." The great philanthropist was as much pleased with Wesley as Wesley was with him. "I was encouraged," said he to Alexander Knox, "to go on vigorously with my own designs. I saw in him how much a single man might achieve by zeal and perseverance; and I thought, why may not I do as much in my way as Mr. Wesley has done in his, if I am only assiduous and persevering; and I determined to pursue my work with more alacrity than ever."*

Wesley was also surprised with the sudden arrival of Dr. Coke from America, and desired all the preachers to meet him, to consider the state of the brethren in that continent. The Conference met on July the 6th, and closed on the 10th. Dr. Coke recounted what had befallen him in the West Indies and America, a recital which produced a general conviction that the time was come for a united effort for the establishment of missions in the isles which were so manifestly waiting for the Word of God. In the report which the doctor made of his foreign charge, he intimated that the membership of the new mission in the West Indies was two thousand nine hundred and fifty, and that in the States twenty-five thousand, the first-fruits of harvests of larger magnitude, as time has shown and will yet show.† The doctor was also greeted with details of the increased prosperity of religion in Ireland; the increase in the membership being nearly one thousand: open opposition had generally ceased, and the people were enabled to worship God under their own vine and fig tree, none making them afraid. No less than thirteen candidates were admitted on trial, which was an addition of twelve to the regular staff of preachers. Wesley says with regard to the Conference, there was no jarring string, but all from the beginning to the end was love and harmony.

* Moore's *Life of Wesley*, II., p. 435. † Etheridge's *Life of Dr. Coke*, pp. 226-27.

The day following the conclusion of the Conference, Wesley, with Dr. Coke, Messrs. Rogers, Leech and several other preachers embarked for Parkgate. The voyage was attended with considerable peril, for the vessel struck on a rock. The captain, who had been in the cabin, leaped up, and running to the deck, when he saw how the ship lay, exclaimed: "Your lives may be saved, but I am undone." Yet no sailor swore, and no woman cried out. While the seamen endeavoured to preserve the ship, Wesley and his companions had recourse to prayer, that He who ruleth the winds and the seas would render their efforts successful. The prayer was graciously answered, as the vessel shot off the rock, and sailed on without any more damage than the breaking of a few planks. Thus was the Divine assurance fulfilled, "Call upon me in the day of trouble and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me."

At the subsequent meeting of the British Conference it was resolved to send missionaries to the West Indies, while Dr. Coke undertook to aid the good work by soliciting subscriptions, and in this benevolent enterprise he persevered to the end of life.

Mr. Dinnen was appointed to Limerick, where he found a pleasing, friendly people, many of them truly devoted to God, and much good was done. The Rev. Jacques Ingram, who was married to a sister of the Rev. E. Smith, and his kind family received the preachers with much respect and affection. The country parts of the circuit were pleasant, and the work prospered there.*

Mr. Rogers was stationed in Cork, where he was gladly received by an affectionate people. Some unhappy jarring during the preceding year had considerably injured the good work, so that the Society was reduced from five hundred to three hundred and ninety-seven members; but peace was restored, and with it religious prosperity. The Lord graciously revived His work, and before the close of the year one hundred were added to the membership.†

* Crook's *Ireland and the Centenary of American Methodism*, p. 65.

† *Lives of Early Methodist Preachers*, IV. p. 322.

Chapter XXXIX.

1788.

THE work of the Lord continued to prosper greatly during the year 1788, more especially on the Charlemont and Cork circuits. Mr. Bates, who was stationed on the former, says, upon the closest investigation Mr. Hugh Moore and he had reason to believe that ninety-six were converted to God, also twenty-six backsliders in heart who had not left the Society, and twenty-nine more who had gone into the world were restored to the flock of Christ's people. The whole increase amounted to about one hundred and eighty. Sixteen of the members were called to the home above, and they died in the full triumph of faith. Such a number of happy deaths proved a means in the hand of God of furthering the cause. In general the work was carried on with very little noise, though there were some meetings at which the people were constrained to cry aloud for mercy.*

On January the 24th Mrs. Rogers wrote to Mr. Wesley giving a most encouraging account of the Society in Cork, and anticipating as great a work of revival there as had taken place in Dublin. The Christmas morning services had proved a blessed season, many were convinced, and some converted. Many more were awakened and justified at the watch-night meeting, but the covenant service exceeded all. Fourteen souls were that day born of God, a number of backsliders were restored, and several believers perfected in love. During the succeeding three weeks between thirty and forty joined the Society, some of whom dated their religious awakening from the night of the covenant service. Several who knew and loved the Lord entered into solemn covenant with Him, and with each other never to rest until they experienced perfect love. A new preaching place, being the fifth, was opened in a

* *Methodist Magazine*, Dublin, 1806, p. 242.

convenient and populous part of the city, where at the first meeting a class of fourteen members was formed.*

As in the time of St. Paul, "not many mighty, not many noble" were "called;" yet there were some "honourable women:" so also, in the early days of Methodism in Ireland, the majority of the members were persons of humble origin and position; but there were a few of nobler blood and higher rank. Of these there was none who could trace a more illustrious ancestry than Mrs. Theodosia Blatchford, the daughter of Lady Mary Tighe, and granddaughter of John, first Earl of Darnley. She was thus a lineal descendant of the celebrated Earls of Clarendon, who took such a leading part in the stirring events of the nation in the seventeenth century. Mrs. Blatchford's claims to notice, however, do not rest on either her parentage or her social position, but on her saintly character, and life of exalted piety and Christian benevolence.

Miss Tighe was married in 1770 to the Rev. William Blatchford, a clergyman of extensive property, who, on account of his learning, was appointed to the charge of Marsh's Library, Dublin, in which position he rendered important and valuable service. About three years after his marriage a malignant fever carried off this excellent man, leaving his widow, with a son and daughter, to deplore his loss. This painful bereavement was no doubt sanctified to Mrs. Blatchford, and probably proved the means of her connection with Methodism and conversion to God.

Mr. Blatchford had two sisters, the elder of whom was married to Dr. Radcliffe, Judge of the Prerogative Court. The other, remaining single, resided with her sister and brother-in-law. She was much afflicted in body, but of an amiable spirit, and very sincere in her religious observances. Mrs. Blatchford was much attached to her, and frequently conversed with her on the subject of experimental religion. She listened, but was slow of heart to believe the privileges of the Gospel, especially that of the witness of the Spirit. Her affliction confined her to bed for a great length of time, and then Dr. Radcliffe used to read the service for the Visitation of the Sick out of the Book of

* Experience of Mrs. H. A. Rogers, pp. 141-48.

Common Prayer every morning, previous to going to court. Though a very upright man, he did not like what was designated Methodism, which Mrs. Blatchford insisted her sister-in-law would enjoy before her death. One morning, as the doctor as usual read prayers for Miss Blatchford, and was about to repeat the Lord's Prayer, she said—"Stop, before you read that prayer, I wish to say a few words," and continued, while all the family, including Mrs. Blatchford, knelt around the bed—"Last night, as I was for hours unable to sleep, I lay contemplating my religious state. I prayed to God over it, and while thus engaged felt the power of God so present to my mind, enabling me in a manner I had never felt before, to claim Him as my Father who is in heaven, and I rejoice still in the holy assurance. Now, doctor, read for me that prayer." With much feeling he finished the service, and then immediately left the room. Mrs. Blatchford followed him, and said—"I told you she would die a Methodist; that is Methodism." He made no observation, but passed on to his professional duties. Miss Blatchford did not long survive, and died in the full assurance of faith.*

While thus the Lord was graciously carrying on His work in the north and the south, and in the midst of the spiritual prosperity with which Dublin was favoured, a serious division took place in the metropolitan Society, in which the Smyths were deeply involved. Nearly three years previously Mr. Wesley had written to his brother that Dr. Coke would have work enough with the Rev. E. Smyth, whom he doubted not needed a bridle,† but it was only now that these unpleasant anticipations were realized. During the course of the spring Dr. Coke arrived in the city, and found that many of the people were in the habit of attending Dissenting chapels on the Sabbath, and in order to obviate this, it was arranged that on three Sundays out of four there should be service in Whitefriar street chapel in church hours, at which the liturgy should be read, and on the fourth Sunday the people should be recommended to attend St. Patrick's cathedral, and receive the Sacrament there. This gave great offence to the Rev. Edward

* Life of the Rev. H. Moore, pp. 206-7.

† Wesley's Works XII., p. 154.

Smyth, and, doubtless, through him, to his brother and some of the wealthy members of the Society, who objected to it, as tending to a separation from the Church. Most likely, however, the real reason was—at least so far as the Smyths were concerned—the fear of injury being done to the congregations at the Bethesda.

The case was referred to Mr. Wesley, who gave it as his judgment, that in the first instance the doctor was too warm; that he should have had more regard to so respectable a body of men as requested him not to carry out his proposal: and that there should be no more services in Whitefriar street chapel during church hours. But subsequently he allowed that while Dr. Coke was in the city, he might have service at eleven o'clock, and that on condition the brethren attended St. Patrick's or their own parish church one Sunday in four to receive the Lord's supper, Mr. Moore might read prayers the other three Sundays in the preaching-house.

Meanwhile, however, offence was given, and the Society lost some of its members. It is said that the number was upwards of one hundred, including a few of the most wealthy,* but according to Wesley it would appear that the number was only five or six altogether.† These seem to have been formed into a class referred to by Mr. Wesley as "Mr. Smyth's Society," which soon disappeared; while whatever loss, financially and socially, the Methodists may have sustained, numerically the gap was more than filled by additional members. A strong feeling, however, against the service still continued on the part of some of the leading officials of the Society, including Messrs. Henry Brooke, Arthur Keene, and Richard D'Olier.

John Miller, a German who had been a page to George II., but after his conversion entered the itinerancy, was, like most of his fellow countrymen, but unlike his brother preachers, fond of a smoke, and carried his pipe and tobacco in a tin case, which on one occasion at least proved of signal service. Travelling to Conference, with a considerable sum of money in his saddlebags, he was stopped by a powerful man, who caught hold of his bridle, saying—"Your money, I want your money."

* Tyerman's Wesley, III. p. 318. † Ibid, p. 583.

"I am a poor Methodist preacher," said John. "I know who and what you are well enough," replied the robber; "but it is your money I want, and must have it." "But," said the itinerant, "what I have belongs to the Conference." "I care nothing for you or your Conference," answered the highwayman—"I want your money, so give it up instantly." A queer thought crossed the brain of John. "Well," said he, "if you must have it, and there is no other way, so be it; but," putting his hand into his breast pocket, drawing forth his tobacco case, and throwing back the lid with a sharp click, he added, "you must first take the contents of this." Seeing the motion, and hearing the noise, which sounded like the cocking of a pistol, the robber dropped the reins and fled, no doubt blessing his stars that he had escaped without a ball through his head, while the preacher put spurs to his horse, and also hastened on, rejoicing over deliverance from danger.*

The Conference met on July the 8th, under the presidency of Dr. Coke; all the preachers in the kingdom were present. The increase in the membership was nine hundred. Thirteen new candidates were received on trial, to whom two others were added during the course of the year. There were two deaths. John Mayly, worn-out in the service of his blessed Master, and John Burnett, "a very pious, devoted, and useful young man," from Dublin, who only travelled one year, and whose end was remarkably triumphant. William M'Cornock, sen., was left free to go to the West Indies, as he had long desired. Here he commenced a mission in Dominica, laboured with a zeal which plainly evinced that he had the interests of souls much at heart. Multitudes flocked to hear him preach, and many received the word with joy. Within a few months not less than one hundred and fifty persons were led to inquire what they must do to be saved. In the midst of these toils and triumphs, he was smitten with a fever, which proved fatal, and thus he was called to enter into the joy of his Lord.

At the close of the Conference Dr. Coke, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Henry Moore, Mr. and Mrs. Connolly, of Clones, and several preachers embarked for England, in order to be

* Memoir of the Rev. William Gurley, pp. 53, 54.

present at the British Conference, which was held in London. From these associates Mrs. Connolly, who had only been a short time married, was impressed with the necessity of conversion; during the sittings of the Conference, she made her home with Mr. Moore in the house adjoining City road chapel, and here after enjoying a season of prayer with the family, the Holy Spirit descended, and created her anew in Christ Jesus. She then became a Methodist, and continued heartily identified with the Society in Ireland and afterwards in America, during the remainder of her protracted life.*

At the Conference this year Mr. Roberts was appointed to labour with Mr. Rogers in Cork, where he had the satisfaction of living in the affections of the people, the Lord working by him in the awakening of sinners, and the edification of believers.† One of those converted at this period was a young man named Richard Dudley, who had joined with others in hooting and throwing stones at the venerable Wesley, during his previous visit to this city; but was now brought in penitence of spirit to the foot of the cross, and for more than half a century proved a consistent and useful leader of the Society.‡

On a calm summer morning at about this time, two persons from Waterford visited the little town of Passage, which lies between the city and the sea. One of these was a young man of remarkably prepossessing appearance, whose heart the Lord had touched, and whose earnest desire that others should experience the love which welled up in his own soul had prompted him to go to the village uninvited and unknown. Mounting a chair, he sung a hymn in the market square, with no apparent listener but his one companion. Then closing his eyes, he poured forth his soul in earnest prayer: and on concluding saw on every side a dense crowd, while from open windows heads were projected, eager to catch every word. A discourse marked by great liberty of speech, with sound evangelical doctrine, made the time one long to be remembered. The preacher was Samuel Wood, who at the following Con-

* *Heroines of Methodism*, pp. 124-25.

† *Life and remains of Rev. T. Roberts*, p. 35.

‡ *Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1848, p. 234-35.

ference was received on trial, and whose theological attainments, sound judgment, and eminent ability in maturer years, amply justified his youthful promise.

Messrs. Rennick and A. Hamilton, sen., who were stationed on the Ballyshannon circuit, were the honoured instruments of introducing Methodism into Cashel. Previous to this period folly and sin abounded in the neighbourhood, the principles of the Reformation were nearly lost, and it was not unusual for Protestants to go to holy wells. Saturday nights were generally devoted to dancing and drinking, which continued until near day-light : and the Sundays were employed in cock-fighting and gambling, which generally ended in quarrelling and fighting.* A Miss Ann Shanklin who resided here, went with her mother to a preaching service, and while Mr. Rennick proclaimed the truths of the Gospel, the Spirit of God applied the word so powerfully to her conscience that with difficulty she could restrain from crying aloud for mercy. After singing Mr. Rennick requested James Bell to pray. He was then a young convert, who had just emerged from darkness into the light of the glorious Gospel, and in 1791 entered the itinerancy. As Miss Shanklin had seen him a short time previously engaged in dancing, she was much surprised to hear him pray with liberty and power. "Is this man," thought she, "who was lately as worldly and wicked as myself, now possessed of the spirit of prayer? Surely this must be of God." And thus she was encouraged to hope for the Divine favour. For some time she continued to attend the Methodist services, her convictions deepened and at length God spoke to her in peace and blessing. Through the influence of her consistent life, and in answer to many prayers, her mother and brother, who had opposed and persecuted her, were led to decision for God, and their house was opened to receive the messengers of mercy. A marvellous moral change now took place in the neighbourhood.† Large numbers, and in some instances whole families were brought under the sanctifying power of religion, and the Divine assurance was graciously fulfilled, "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree ;

* *Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1840, pp. 286-87.

† *Methodist Magazine*, Dublin, 1809, pp. 219-24.

and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."

At Cortrasna there was at this time a gracious outpouring of the Holy Spirit, many were awakened and converted, so that in a few months the Society was more than doubled. Amongst those who partook of the blessings of this gracious visitation was a young man named John Robinson, who then entered upon his Christian course, which he maintained with uniform consistency for half a century. Shortly after his conversion he commenced in Newtownbutler a meeting for children on Sunday evenings at which he prayed, and heard the scholars read and repeat portions of Scripture.* This was the fourth Sunday school in Ireland of which there is any record. Mr. William Browne, who travelled in the Primitive Wesleyan Society for twenty-two years with acceptance and success, states that when about seven years old—that is, during this year—he "attended a blessed means for the improvement of the children then adopted in Newtownbutler. The superintendent commenced it with singing and prayer; he then gave each child a portion of Scripture to commit to memory for the ensuing Sabbath, after repeating which he asked a number of questions, and gave such advice as he thought suitable to the children's capacity." This Sunday school proved the means of leading Browne, as well as others, to seek the Lord; and thus at the very beginning of the movement in this country the seed sown brought forth fruit.†

Mr. John Black was appointed to the Enniskillen circuit. During his first round a mob assembled, consisting of some of those who ought to have been the most respectable Protestant inhabitants of the district, they violently seized the servant of God, tied a rope round his body, and dragged him several times through the nearest river. The cruel ruffians then cut off the ears of his horse, and threatened to do the same to himself. It is worthy of note that in the course of a comparatively short time every trace of these guilty parties and their descendants passed into oblivion.‡ "Verily, He is a God that judgeth in the earth."

* *Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1839, p. 83.

† *Ibid.*, 1851, p. 22. ‡ *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1853, p. 184.

In Omagh at this period Methodism had a feeble existence, the sphere of its operations was greatly limited, and its few adherents had no other influence than that derived from their piety. The only members of Society in the town were a few persons in humble circumstances, who were the objects of much scorn and contempt. Their leader, Richard Magee, was a man who strove to commend the Saviour to others. Sometimes the meetings were broken up through the violence of the mobs that surrounded the house where they met. On one occasion, as a preacher proclaimed the message of salvation in the street, a man standing at a distance lifted up a stone, and with a deliberate aim struck the champion of the cross. The villain then walked away in peace; but a good old gentleman, who was looking at the whole affair, turning to the crowd, said—"My name is not Sam Galbraith if that man dies in his senses." Few, however, seemed concerned one way or another; but not long after God laid His hand on the persecutor, he became a lunatic, and died in a state of dreadful insanity!* Mr. Bates, who was stationed here, said that the aspect of the circuit was unpleasant and discouraging. He found very many who had little more than a name; yet he experienced the Divine presence in almost every place, which encouraged him to go forward. So he laboured on, and not in vain, for by the end of the year there was an increase of thirty members.†

Mr. Crook, after an absence of two years, was again appointed, with David Barrowclough, to Charlemont, from which a new circuit had been cut off, and their labours were much acknowledged of the Lord, many were turned from darkness to light, and the young converts engaged heartily in work for Christ, especially holding cottage prayer meetings, which attracted much attention.‡ Amongst those converted was a young man named David Woods, who lived in the neighbourhood of Moy, and had been a great profligate, much addicted to cock-fighting and such practices, and a great foe to the Methodists. His enmity carried him so far that he determined to face them on their own ground, in one of their class meetings

* Memoir of Mrs. Anne Graham, pp. 23-6.

† *Methodist Magazine*, Dublin, 1805, pp. 243-44.

‡ *Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1831, p. 258.

and silence them. He went, but when he heard the leader asking each member concerning the state of his soul, and the replies, he trembled: and when the question was put to himself he told plainly his object in coming, but that such a fear had come over him that he could not understand. However he went again, but with a different intention, was greatly blessed, and became valiant for the truth. The young convert having an impression that he should work for Christ at Loughgall, could get no rest day or night thinking about it, and at length resolved to try and get some place near it for a service. On his way thither he met his uncle, an old companion in sin, who, addressing him said, "Ho! David, how are the cocks?" "Sir," replied the young Christian, "speak no more to me on that subject: I have served the devil long enough in that line, but have found a better Master." Waxing bolder through this avowal of his faith, he enquired—"Will you allow me to hold a meeting in your house next Sunday?" "You hold a meeting," said the uncle with a sneer. "Who taught you to preach? You may have the house, but I wont hear you." The time having been arranged, they parted, and the service was held, which led to similar meetings, in the house of Mr. Geo. Gainer, the congregations rapidly increased, and the Lord gave His blessing. Mr. Gilpin came to help, and a gracious awakening commenced. When a Society was formed, between forty and fifty persons were received on trial for membership: and Mr. Gainer's house became the stopping-place for the preachers, who were made a great blessing to his family.*

George Morrow, one of the Methodists in Dungannon, got the conviction that he should go to the house of Mr. Thomas Shillington at Crew bridge, and try to raise a class there. He was received in the most cordial manner, and a Society was formed consisting of fifteen members. Mr. Shillington thus became a Methodist, and was led to the enjoyment of a large measure of those blessings which the Society has held forth so prominently as the believer's privilege.†

Towards the close of this year, a promising and devoted

* *Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1823, pp. 335-40.

† *Ibid.*, 1844, pp. 345-48.

young preacher, named Hugh Pugh, was removed by death. His naturally frank, amiable and lovable disposition was elevated and sanctified by Divine grace. He was received on trial in 1787, and appointed to the Clones circuit, where his labours were much blessed; but excessive work laid the foundation of disease which compelled him to become a supernumerary, and return to his home on the Lisburn circuit, where the disease made rapid progress. As the end approached, his mother inquired if he realized that salvation which he had preached to others: and he replied—"Glory be to God, I do! Jesus is all in all!" and in holy triumph his ransomed spirit entered the Paradise of God. *

Chapter XL.

1789.

ABOUT the beginning of 1789 the following incident occurred, affording a striking example at once of God's care of His servants, and their fidelity and courage in His work. As one of the preachers journeyed he was met by three highwaymen, one of whom seized his horse by the bridle, a second presented a pistol to his breast, and the third attempted to pull him to the ground, swearing that he would have his money or his life. The servant of God, however, nothing daunted, looked at them steadfastly and inquired if they had prayed that morning. But they were not to be diverted from their wicked purpose by such a question, and without delay deprived him of his watch, took off the saddle bags, and pulled out a knife to cut them open, when the preacher told them to stop, that there was nothing in them but a few religious books to which they were welcome, and as to money, he had only twopence-halfpenny, which he gave them. He then said: "Now, shall I give you my coat? You are welcome to anything I have, only remember

* *Arminian Magazine*, 1789, pp. 635-38

I am a servant of God, and am now engaged in His work. Let me pray with you before we part, and it may do you more good than anything I have to give." At this one of the robbers said they would keep nothing belonging to the man, for if they did, vengeance would pursue them; so the money and watch were returned, and the bags refastened to the saddle. The preacher thanked them, renewed his request that they would engage in prayer, knelt down on the road, and with much power pleaded with God on their behalf. Meantime, two of them made off; but the third remained to the close, and was much affected, so that there was reason to hope he resolved to become a new man.*

This year Mr. Wesley, accompanied by Mr. Bradford, visited Ireland for the twenty-first and last time. After a stormy and protracted voyage he arrived in Dublin on Sunday morning, March the 29th: and, notwithstanding the illness from which he had suffered, went straight to the chapel, where he preached on the sickness and recovery of Hezekiah, with special reference to the illness of George III; and afterwards administered the Lord's supper to about five hundred persons. At this sacramental service he was assisted by Mr. Myles, the junior preacher on the circuit. They had a very solemn meeting, the Lord crowning the ordinance with His presence, and separated, giving glory to God.

During this visit to the metropolis Mr. Wesley met with very great respect and attention from several persons of rank in Dublin and its vicinity, including the Earl of Moira. Mr. Myles says he never saw the venerable evangelist more honoured by those who were not members of the Society than at this time. They seemed to think it a blessing to have him under their roof: and such a sacred influence attended his words that it was no ordinary privilege to have the opportunity of listening to his conversation. †

He rejoiced much at the state of the Society, the congregations at five in the morning being much larger in proportion than those in City road chapel; Gravel walk house was filled

* *Lives of Early Methodist Preachers*, IV., pp. 323-24.

† *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1831, p. 298.

as he had never seen it before ; all seemed to hear as for life ; and in meeting the bands he found amongst them a greater number of those who were perfected in love than even in London itself.

Meantime Wesley had "letter upon letter" concerning the additional Sunday service, which had been introduced by Dr. Coke, and therefore wrote his views in full to "Certain persons in Dublin." In this letter he plainly states, he did not separate from the Church, and had no intention of doing so ; that they had not done so who attended the Sunday noon services, for they had been present in the church and at the Sacrament there much more frequently than for two years previously ; that there was no ground to fear that it would lead to any such separation ; and that the strife was altogether on the part of the objectors, who themselves did not attend the services of the Establishment as frequently as they ought.*

How far Wesley succeeded in thus satisfying the minds of the objectors who continued in the Society and were sincere in their attachment to the Episcopal Church, is exceedingly doubtful. Evidently they could not see how having services in church hours was not, *ipso facto*, separating from the Establishment, no matter how frequently many of those who attended went also to church. Hence they appear to have persevered in their opposition to the innovation, until eventually a compromise was made, the hour of service being changed from eleven to two o'clock, when very large congregations attended.†

So far as the Smyths were concerned, who had separated from Methodism, and whose zeal for the Church was a mere pretence, the breach was not repaired, although Mr. Wesley was received by them with the utmost respect, and even preached three times in the Bethesda at the pressing invitation of Mr. Smyth. No sooner, however, had the venerable evangelist left the city than he was assailed in the public papers in the most bitter and scurrilous manner ; the cry was raised "the Church is in danger," and the Archbishop and

* Wesley's Works, XHL., pp. 267-68.

† Smith's History of Methodism in Ireland, p. 71.

clergy were called upon to haste to the rescue: "for a Mr. Myles, a layman, had assisted Mr. Wesley in administering the Lord's supper, the greatest innovation that had occurred for fifty years!" This brought on a controversy which continued for three months, during which "every week, and almost every day," the devoted Wesley "was bespattered in the public papers, either by Mr. Smyth or by Mr. Mann, his curate." * This was certainly an attempt to take a mote out of a brother's eye, by those whose own vision was obscured by a beam: for, however Wesley may have separated from the Church, they had done so much more. But these worthy ecclesiastics, who professed such zeal for the Establishment, did not see that they were the real separatists, in not only conducting service every Sabbath in church hours, but also in regularly administering the ordinances without either themselves or their chapel having the slightest recognition from the authorities. During this fracas Wesley sent at least one letter to the papers, in which he re-affirmed his life-long attachment to the Church, as unquestioned by the archbishops and bishops, and apparent in the course he had ever adopted, and replied to the objections which had been made to his conduct. † Such strife could not fail to cause profound sorrow to all who loved the prosperity of Zion. Many were in tears on account of it, and not a few terribly agitated, enquiring how this would end. Wesley replied with confidence—"in glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good-will among men," and so no doubt it did. People grew weary, and insisted that this violent and unmerited abuse should cease: and thus ended a controversy which brought lasting shame on those who originated it, and in the good providence of God brought forth the righteousness of His servant "as the light, and his judgment as the noon-day."

Meanwhile on April the 13th Wesley left the metropolis to make his last tour through the provinces. At Clonard, three or four times as many were present at the service as the building could contain, the power of God was remarkably present,

* Tyerman's *Life of Wesley*, III., p. 583.

† Wesley's *Works*, XIII., pp. 268-71.

and several were "pricked in the heart," including the master of the house. At Tyrrell's Pass, though the wind was piercingly cold, the multitude that had assembled obliged the evangelist to preach out of doors, after which he gave a plain account of the design of Methodism. At Mullingar the congregation in the court-house was small; but in Longford it was large and fervent. At Keenagh, also, where he was the guest of Mr. A. Kingston, the chapel could not contain the people.

At Athlone some of the leaders had, without reason, taken offence at Mr. Dinnen, the Assistant, who therefore cautioned one of them against imbibing the same prejudice, and warned him of the consequence. Misunderstanding this, he became very angry, others took part with him, and thus the Society was rent and torn. Wesley reasoned with the irate official, but in vain. "One might as well have talked to the north wind." So he gave him up to God, and endeavoured to quench the flame among the people. On Sunday, as the hearers assembled in large numbers from the surrounding country, the chapel could not contain them; but the commanding officer having offered Wesley the use of any part of the barrack, he preached in the riding-house, a very spacious building, to a multitude of people. Some of the gentry especially, who had attended out of mere curiosity, were deeply impressed with the spirit and appearance of the venerable preacher, and declared that there seemed to be something superhuman about him.*

At Aghrim the service was held in the church, which was much more largely attended than when he was there before; many who had once been Romanists being present, who had attended church regularly after his previous visit. At Eyrecourt the church was well filled, and a large number of the hearers seemed to feel the word. At Birr, previously "one of the dullest places in Ireland," but now "one of the liveliest," the chapel and yard were full, and the time was one of special blessing. At Tullamore, in the beautiful new court-house, and at Brackagh Castle, the people listened with solemn and prayerful attention. At Portarlinton "the congregation was exceedingly well dressed, but careless and ill-behaved." At

* *Irish Evangelist*, 1860, p. 82.

Mountmellick the church was crowded with hearers, who were all attention ; and at Maryborough the church, one of the most elegant he had seen in the kingdom, was thoroughly filled, although many of those present looked as if they had not been in a place of worship before. At Carlow, although the people were very civil, and many of them attentive, he did not think " the time of Carlow " had yet come. At Enniscorthy he preached in the place prepared for him, which he says " was large, but not very elegant ; " however, God was there ! At Wexford, where a chapel had been built during the preceding year, the service was held in the assembly room, and the congregation was large.

At Waterford evidently some difference of opinion had existed between him and Mr. Deaves, who probably was the lessee of the Wexford chapel, as to its settlement in accordance with the Deed Poll ; but the first news he heard on his arrival was that Mr. Deaves was willing to settle the house in any way that Mr. Wesley desired. So with a relieved mind the venerable evangelist preached to a numerous congregation in the evening. The God of peace and love was in the midst, and His presence realized by the whole assembly. Next morning also there was a large congregation. Wesley met all the Society, except eight or ten at breakfast on each of the two days he remained in the city, and closed his labours there by " strongly exhorting them all to rehearse no past grievances : and only to provoke one another to love and good works." At Cappoquin as he went up the street he was followed by a mob, hallooing and shouting with all their might, but a sentinel at the door of the barrack, in which the service was held, kept out the rabble, so there was a quiet congregation within.

At Cork, where he was the guest of Mr. Rogers,* the Lord had continued to bless His word to the salvation of many, especially among the soldiers ; and it is probable more good would have been done, but for a few troublesome persons, who, under a pretence of standing up for the Church, hurt the minds of others. Notwithstanding every difficulty, the number of members had increased to six hundred and sixty, many of whom

* Wesley's Works, XIII., p. 86.

were much alive to God.* Wesley endeavoured to calm the feeling which had been excited among the people about separating from the Church, by preaching a sermon on Hebrews v. 4. In this discourse he shewed the nature of the different offices in the Christian Church, ably vindicating the rights of lay preachers, and asserting that he did not knowingly vary from any rule of the Established Church, "unless in those few instances in which he judged there was an absolute necessity." This he considered was not separating from it, a course that he strongly deprecated.† Wesley administered the Lord's supper here to about four hundred and fifty communicants: and on the evening of the same day, says he preached with power to more than the house could contain, and afterwards to the Society, adding, "May God write it on their hearts! I am clear of their blood."

From Cork he went to Bandon, where he was the guest of Mr. T. Bennett. Here Messrs. J. Kerr and R. Bridge were stationed, who, having obtained the permission of the previous Conference, set about building a new chapel, the congregations having out-grown the old one on Kilbrogan hill. Ground was secured in the North Main street, opposite the present entrance to Kilbrogan church; and the erection was a square building, a little more than half the size of the present chapel, and two or three times as large as the old one. There were no class-rooms; but at the rear was the preacher's residence, which faced the river, and had a garden in front. The opening service was conducted by Mr. Wesley on May the 7th, when it was well filled, and he preached an impressive sermon from "To the Jew first and also to the Greek."‡ But he did not find the same spiritual life among the people as in Cork.

At Kinsale also a chapel was erected this year on the top of Compass hill, which served the Society there for about twenty-four years. At Kilfinnane|| Wesley preached on "One thing is needful;" and next proceeded to Limerick, where he was the guest of the Rev. Mr. Ingram, and "wanted

* *Lives of Early Methodist Preachers*, IV., pp. 322-23.

† *Arminian Magazine*, 1790, p. 230. ‡ *Irish Christian Advocate*, 1883, p. 317.

|| Called in Wesley's Journal, Kilkenny, evidently an error.

nothing the kingdom could afford." The chapel could not contain the congregation, and it seemed as if all were deeply sensible of the Divine presence. At Pallas the remains of the Palatines assembled from Ballingarrane, Courtmatrix, and Rathkeale; in each of which places a blessed revival had commenced, such as had not been known in this neighbourhood before. Large numbers were deeply convinced, many converted to God, and not a few perfected in love. Some of the Societies were doubled in their membership, and others increased six or even ten fold. At the service the people received the word gladly, and great was their rejoicing in the Lord.

At Kilchreest the congregation was so large that Wesley was obliged to preach out of doors, though it rained all the time. As he had not been well, this did him no good; but he continued his work until he came to Ballinrobe, when he had to give up, and let another conduct the service. Having had a day's rest, he went on to Castlebar, where he became much better and preached to a lively congregation. On meeting the Society he found it increased both in numbers and in grace. Here also he administered the Lord's supper, at which two of the Episcopal clergy were present and united. At Sligo, he was entertained in the barrack by Mr. Burgess, who invited a large party to meet him at dinner. During the repast the venerable minister suddenly laid down his knife and fork, clasped his hands, and looked up in the attitude of praise and prayer. Instantly every one was still and silent. He then gave out and sang, with great animation, the lines:—

" And can we forget,
In tasting our meat,
The angelical food which ere long we shall eat;
When enroll'd with the blest,
In glory we rest,
And for ever sit down at the heavenly feast?"

A peculiar solemnity and hallowed feeling rested on all present. He preached in the evening, and says he never before saw such a congregation in the town, so numerous and serious, and again at five on the following morning. After breakfast his host and family bade a last farewell to their venerated friend, having the

sad consciousness that they would see his face no more, and expecting "ne'er to look upon his like again."*

At Manorhamilton, where Wesley expected little good, he was surprised at the tokens of spiritual life; the power of God fell upon the congregation in a remarkable manner, so that scarcely anyone was unaffected. He then proceeded to Annadale, in associating with the genial host and hostess of which he soon forgot all the labours of the day. At Ballyconnell he was the guest of Mrs. Montgomery, whose son, Archibald, entered the itinerancy in 1794, and baptized her infant, who subsequently became a devoted and consistent member of the Society.† Here they had a comfortable meeting, and many found their desires after God increased. At Killashandra Wesley preached in a pleasant meadow to a numerous and attentive audience; and then went to Kilmore, where he was the guest of Mr. R. Creighton, and where a very large congregation assembled from all the country round. Having preached in the town-hall at Cavan, as he went through Ballyhaise the people collected, and would not be content until he came out of his chaise and spent some time with them in prayer. At this period the Smiths and Fergusons, of Drumliff, had lately joined the Society, and were very happy in God their Saviour.‡

At Clones Wesley preached in the Danish fort to about four thousand people, who seemed ready to drink in every word. One of the hearers was William Ferguson, who in the following year entered the itinerancy, and became a most devoted, exemplary and useful preacher.|| At Brookeborough, where the congregation was exceedingly large, the venerable evangelist was the guest of Mr. M'Carthy, of Abbey Lodge, whose son, then a lad of thirteen, passed to the home above in 1872, having been spared to live ninety-six years, and who all through life remembered distinctly, and took a special delight in speaking of the time when he sat at the feet and listened to the instruction of the venerable founder of Methodism.§ Wesley says a more

* Memoirs of the Rev. Joseph Burgess, pp. 29-30.

† *Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1845, pp. 234-36.

‡ Lanktree's Narrative, p. 8. || Life of the Rev. F. Taaberry, p. 187.

§ *Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1872, p. 315.

affectionate family he had not found in the kingdom. On the morning after the service, as they were talking together, one and another fell on their knees, and "most of them burst into tears and earnest cries, the like of which he had seldom heard, so that they scarcely knew how to part."

At Enniskillen Wesley preached in the market-house to an unwieldy multitude, and at Sidaire to the old steady congregation. At Kirlish Lodge there was a large audience, many of whom came from far. Thence he went to Moyle glebe, the residence of the Rev. Dr. Wilson, whose guest he was, and of whom he speaks as a man of uncommon learning, particularly in Oriental languages. In the evening a numerous congregation assembled in the castle yard, but as soon as Wesley began to preach the rain commenced, which led some of the hearers to leave: so he prayed aloud that God would stay the windows of heaven, and He did so, the people returned and were deeply impressed with this marked answer to prayer. Next morning the following characteristic incident occurred: Shortly after family worship, which had been conducted by the venerable evangelist, Dr. Wilson said to him: "My wife was so delighted with your prayer, that she has been looking for it in the Prayer-Book but cannot find it; I wish you could point it out to me." "My dear brother," said Wesley, "I cannot, because that prayer came down from heaven, and I sent it up there again."*

At Londonderry he found "a neat, convenient preaching-house just finished, a society increasing and well united, and the whole city prejudiced in its favour." Here he was the guest of Mr. Knox, who invited to his house a number of clergymen, including the Rev. J. Pitt Kennedy, a son of the gentleman with whom Wesley dined in 1765, and who was then Mayor of the city. During the course of dinner Mr. Wesley, addressing this minister, said that he had received from his father, twenty-four years previously, a most useful suggestion as to the best means of reconciling two parties at variance, which was by leading each to give full vent to everything which formed matter of mutual complaint, and then to take

* *Methodist Recorder*, 1879, p. 122.

that moment for bringing them to mutual reconciliation; adding he had often followed that course, and seldom found it unsuccessful.* In regard to Mr. Wesley, Mr. Knox writes: "I was delighted to find his cheerfulness in no respect abated. It was too obvious that his bodily frame was sinking; but his spirit was as alert as ever; and he was little less the life of the company he happened to be in than he had been four-and-twenty years before, when I first knew him. Such unclouded sunshine of the breast, in the deepest winter of age, and on the felt verge of eternity, bespoke a mind whose recollections were as unsullied as its present sensations were serene."†

In passing through Newtownlimavady Wesley was informed that there was a congregation waiting for him: so he proceeded to the chapel, and found it filled with most attentive hearers, and the power of God was among them. At Coleraine the Society was just after his own heart, "in spirit, in carriage, and even in dress." The services were held in the large meeting house, which was well filled. But he was much concerned to find that the junior preacher, John Stephens, who had been received on trial at the preceding Conference, was far gone in consumption. This promising and devoted young man only survived a few days, and then died in the full triumph of faith.

At Ballymena and Antrim there were large congregations in the meeting houses. At Lisburn the evangelist preached in what he calls the new chapel, but in reality was the old one which had been enlarged and improved through the liberality of Mr. Johnson. It is described by Wesley as the largest and best finished preaching-house in the north of Ireland. Amongst those present at the service here was Mr. Thomas Collier,‡ who was then led to give his heart to God. He afterwards settled in Ballynacoy, where his house became a centre of religious light in what was then a very dark and benighted district of country.

In Belfast Wesley preached in the first Presbyterian meeting-house,|| Rosemary street, which had been erected six

* Life of the Rev. H. Moore, p. 800. † Tyerman's Life of Wesley, III., p. 577.

‡ Grandfather of the Revs. James and Robert Collier.

|| Now occupied by the Unitarians.

years previously at a cost of £2,300; and he pronounces it "the most complete place of worship" he had ever seen, "being beautiful in the highest degree." It was so crowded that it was with no little difficulty he got in: and he had great liberty of speech in proclaiming here the glorious Gospel of the grace of God. One of those present was a young man, named Joseph Bradbury, who then received his first religious impressions, and soon after obtained the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins. For nearly forty years he was a devoted, exemplary and faithful leader in the Society.*

At Newtownards Wesley preached in the Presbyterian meeting-house to a multitude of people, all of whom seemed much affected. At Portaferry also the meeting-house was placed at his disposal, and the large audience was most attentive. At Strangford the vicar invited him to the church, which was well filled, and the power of God was mightily present. At Downpatrick the evangelist preached to a numerous congregation in the grove, and afterwards met the Society, "now well established in grace, and still increasing both in numbers and in strength." At Tanderagee there was such a number present as he had not seen since coming into the country, and all listened with quiet and deep attention. At Killyman he was the guest of the Rev. C. Caulfield, and preached at the door of his house. At Dungannon the service was held in the castle-yard, which contained a large auditory. At Blackwatertown the word sank deep into many hearts, for the Lord was in the midst of the congregation. At Armagh there was once more a multitude of people in the avenue of Mr. M'Geough, who was then just tottering over the grave. Amongst those present upon whose minds deep and lasting impressions for good were made were John Waugh, who subsequently entered the itinerancy,† and a young man named Simon Reilly, who for half a century received the preachers, with much cordiality, in his house at Drummond.‡

At Newry Wesley preached again in the Presbyterian meeting-house, which was well filled, and it proved a season of rich spiritual blessing. Having also proclaimed the glad tidings

* *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1829, p. 430.

† *Ibid.*, 1854, p. 384. ‡ *Ibid.*, 1859, p. 96.

of salvation in the market-place, Dundalk, to a large and attentive congregation ; at Drogheda, to a tolerably quiet auditory ; and at Swords, he returned to Dublin. Here he preached, administered the Lord's supper, and visited the classes, which contained a little more than one thousand members, after he had excluded above one hundred. He then went to Rosanna, the residence of Mrs. Tighe, sister-in-law of Mrs. Blatchford, where he preached in the great hall to about one hundred of the most influential persons in the neighbourhood, most of whom seemed to feel as well as hear. At Wicklow he held the service in the court-house, and then returned to the metropolis.

The Conference met on July the 3rd, and concluded on the 7th. Ten candidates were admitted on trial. There was one death, in addition to the two already referred to—that of Francis Frazier, who entered the itinerancy in 1786. He is described as a good young man, and an acceptable preacher, who died in great peace. The increase in membership during the year amounted to nearly one thousand eight hundred. It is rather amusing to read the following minute—"Except in extraordinary cases, every preacher is to go to bed before ten o'clock." This year the first pastoral Address was written. It was signed by Mr. Wesley, subsequently adopted verbatim by the British Conference, and consists of a statement of the increasing pressure that had come on the Contingent Fund, and an appeal for further assistance, urged on the ground of the increasing number and wealth of the Society. This Conference, which in the main consisted of Irishmen, as the great majority of the English brethren had retired from the country, included such honoured and familiar names as J. Crook, T. Barber, G. Brown, J. Kerr, M. Joyce, W. Griffith, J. M'Donald, M. Stewart, and many others. Of these brethren Wesley's final testimony is a high tribute to their sterling worth. He says—"I never had between forty and fifty such preachers together in Ireland before : all of them, we had reason to hope, alive to God, and earnestly devoted to His service. I never saw such a number of preachers before so unanimous in all points, particularly as to leaving the Church, which none of them had the least thought of. It is no wonder that there has been this year so large an increase of the Society." And again, "I found such

a body of men as I hardly believed could have been found together in Ireland: men of so sound experience, so deep piety, and so strong understanding. I am convinced they are no way inferior to the English Conference, except it be in number.”*

On the Conference Sunday, Wesley and his preachers, together with a large number of the members in the city, attended the service in St. Patrick’s. “The Dean,” says he, “preached a serious, useful sermon: and we had such a company of communicants as I suppose had scarce been seen there together for above a hundred years.” The Friday following was observed as a day of fasting and prayer, chiefly for the increase of the work of God, and was concluded with a very solemn watch-night service.

On Sunday, July the 12th, Wesley preached his farewell sermon to a crowded and deeply affected congregation. At the conclusion he gave out the hymn beginning—“Come, let us join our friends above,” commented on its sentiments, and pronounced it the sweetest hymn his brother ever wrote. Having administered the Lord’s supper to several hundreds of the Society, he dined in the house of Mr. R. D’Olier, commended in prayer the family to the protection and blessing of the Almighty, and proceeded to the packet, accompanied by several members of the household and other friends, who were joined by a multitude at the quay. The scene here was most touching as Wesley bade adieu to Ireland for ever. Before going on board he gave out a hymn, and the crowd joined him in singing. He then knelt down, and asked God to bless them and their families, the Church, and especially Ireland. Shaking of hands followed, many wept, and not a few fell on the old man’s neck and kissed him. He went on deck, the vessel moved, and then with his hands still lifted in prayer the winds of heaven wafted him from an island which he dearly loved, and the Irish Methodists “saw his face no more.”†

Let us pause here and look at the noble work this honoured servant of God had been instrumental in accomplishing in Ireland. He visited this country, as has been stated, twenty-one times, embracing about five years and a half of his public

* Wesley’s Works, IV., pp. 462-63.

† Anecdotes of the Wesleys, pp. 311-12.

life. Nor did he come unaided, men of kindred spirit accompanied him, and Ireland should never be unmindful of what she thus owes to English missionary zeal. At an early period several leaders in London expressed their regret that Wesley and his brother should expend so much time on this side of the channel, and send so many preachers here ; but he responded with characteristic brevity—"Have patience and Ireland will repay you."

These words were prophetic, and had been blessedly and gloriously fulfilled long before he had ended his last visit to the country. Only a little more than half a century had elapsed since the introduction of Methodism, and notwithstanding fierce and persistent opposition, it had made amazing strides. Although Roman Catholics and Protestants, Episcopalians and Presbyterians alike opposed its progress, and endeavoured to crush its very existence, the proclamation of the Gospel had been made through almost the length and breadth of the land, and everywhere had been attended with signal success. The members of the Methodist Society multiplied, and its sphere of labour extended until its chapels numbered eighty-two, preachers sixty-five, and members upwards of fourteen thousand. From amongst the converts of Irish Methodism the Lord raised up a large staff of earnest devoted Christian workers, including not less than one hundred and thirty-seven who had entered the active work of the itinerancy. Some of these were princes in Israel, men who occupied a foremost place among the ministers of their day, such as William Thompson, Henry Moore, Adam Clarke and Walter Griffith.

The influence of Irish Methodism, however, extended far beyond the pale of its membership. The Christian Churches of the land began to awake and shake themselves from the dust. When Wesley entered on his noble and self-denying mission he was regarded with suspicion, reproaches were heaped on him, and persecution followed him. But one of the high recompences vouchsafed by the Divine Master was, that he was permitted to live to vindicate the purity of his motives, and to win the esteem of the more generous of his adversaries. On June the 26th, 1785, he writes: "I am become, I know not how, an honourable man. The scandal of the cross is ceased, and all

the kingdom, rich and poor, Romanists and Protestants, behave with courtesy, nay, and seeming good-will! It seems as if I had well-nigh finished my course, and our blessed Lord was giving me an honourable discharge."* Many of the ministers and members of the Protestant Churches saw that through the influence of Methodism their membership was increased, their spiritual life deepened, and their ministerial ranks filled here and there with men of piety, zeal and Christian worth. Large numbers of all classes, who did not identify themselves with the Society, came under the quickening influence of the truth, as preached by the itinerants. Nor were the fruits of Irish Methodism confined to this country. The good seed was carried hence to France, Newfoundland, the West Indies, the Canadas, and the United States of America: and a glorious spiritual harvest was reaped, the extent of which eternity alone will reveal. Not to dwell upon the numerous and powerful influences for good which, unrecorded, and it may be unobserved, went forth from this country, it should be remembered that large numbers of the peasantry, who in humble homesteads had been brought to a saving knowledge of the truth, emigrated to distant lands, and proved a sanctifying leaven in the land of their adoption. Besides, there are countless unseen influences, the results of which can never be tabulated; for

"Our many deeds, the thoughts that we have thought,
They go out from us thronging every hour;
And in them all is folded up a power
That on the earth doth move them to and fro;
And mighty are the marvels they have wrought
In hearts we know not, and may never know."

Fourteen hundred years ago Ireland was the great centre from which Divine light radiated through the western part of this continent. It was by means of Hibernian missionaries that two-thirds of Saxon England, the whole of Scotland, all Belgium, Switzerland, and the chief parts of Germany were turned from dumb idols to serve the living God. And so, in the last century, through God's blessing, Irish Methodism

* Wesley's Works, XIII., p. 65.

performed a similar work in the British Dominion and United States of America : and thus claims to stand in the same relation to the largest group of Churches in the New World, as the Irish Church occupied in the Old, when she was the Mother Church of Northern Europe.



“ When He first the work begun,
Small and feeble was His day :
Now the word doth swiftly run,
Now it wins its widening way :
More and more it spreads and grows,
Ever mighty to prevail ;
Sin's strongholds it now o'erthrows,
Shakes the trembling gates of hell.”



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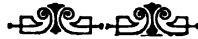
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"Go, little Book! from this my solitude.

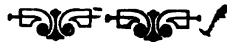
I cast thee on the waters—go thy ways;

And if, as I believe, thy vein be good,

The World will find thee after many days.

Be it with thee according to thy worth:

Go, little Book! in faith I send thee forth."



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